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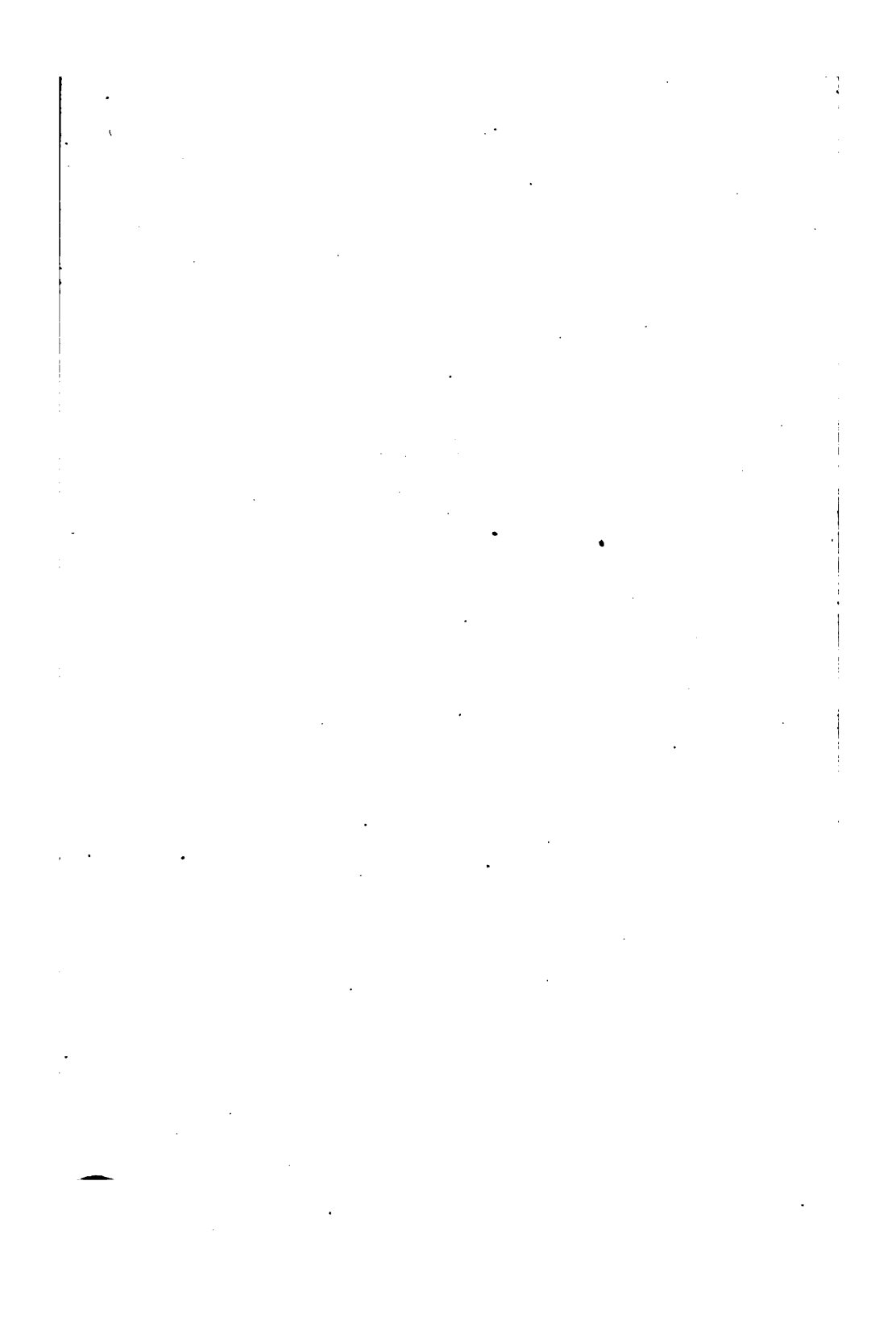
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CHURCH AND CHAPEL

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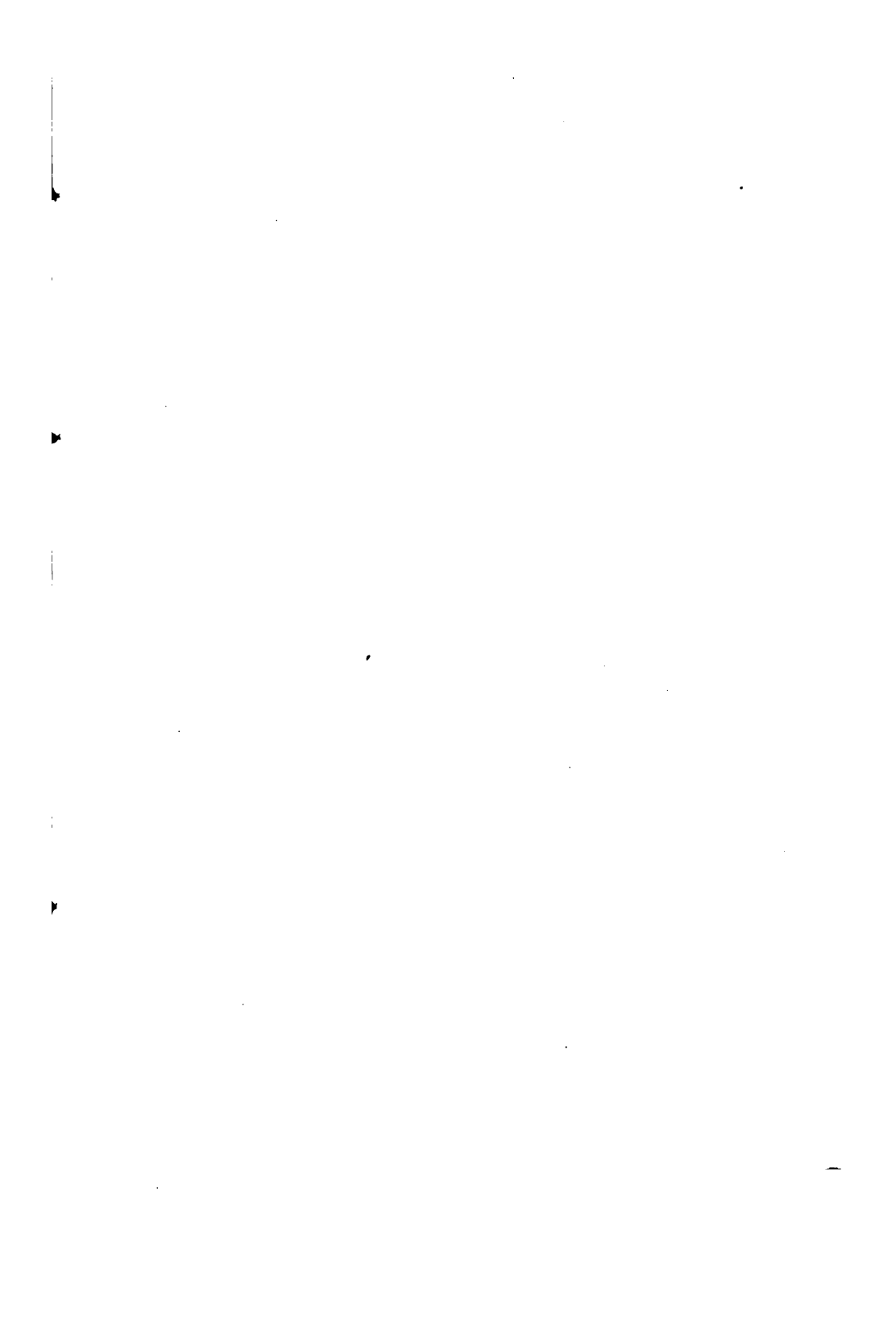
REV. R. H. HADDEN, B.A.





CHURCH AND CHAPEL

Catalogued throughout.



O God the Father of our Lord -Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace : Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord : that as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—
A Prayer for Unity.

CHURCH AND CHAPEL

SERMONS
ON THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND DISSENT

EDITED BY THE
REV. R. H. HADDEN, B.A.

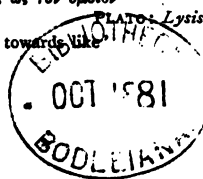
CURATE OF ST BOTOLPH, BISHOPSGATE

WITH INTRODUCTION
BY
ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, D.D.
DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

ἀλλὰ τὸν θεὸν αὐτὸν φασὶ ποιεῖν φίλους αὐτοῦς, ἄγοντα
παρ' ἀλλήλους. λέγουσι δὲ πως ταῦτα, ὡς ἐγγίμναι, ὡδί·

αἰεὶ τοι τὸν ὁμοῖον ἄγει θεὸς ὡς τὸν ὁμοῖον

'God is ever drawing like towards like'



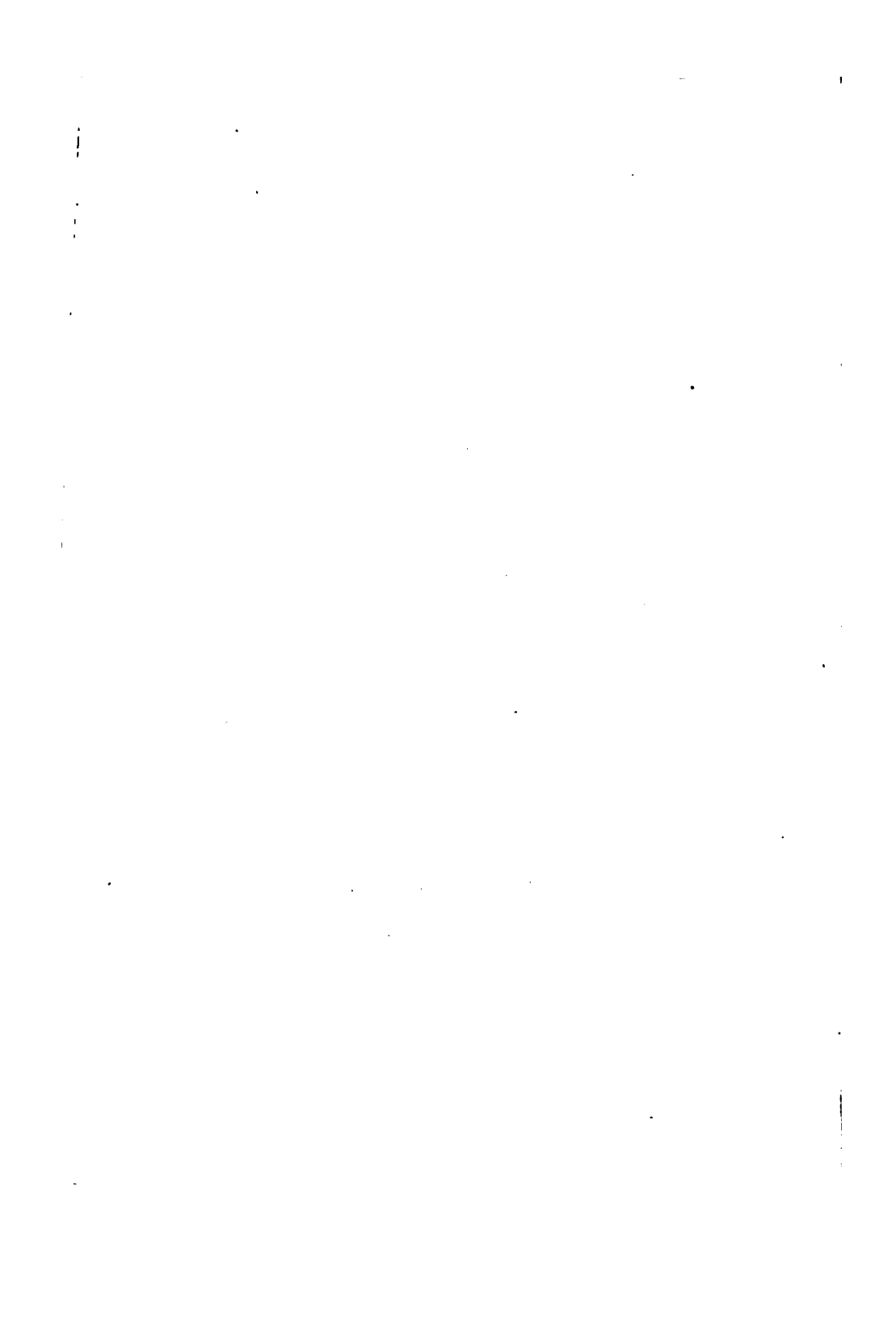
LONDON
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE
1881

100. b.b. 136.

How good ! how kind ! and he is gone.'

This volume must now go forth under circumstances of sacred sorrow. The share which he had in it occupied Dean Stanley till within a few days of the illness which has removed him hence. When the suggestion of its publication was made he welcomed the idea with all the cordiality which marked his appreciation of every well-meant endeavour, and it was very near his heart that this book might do something to further the cause of charity among English Christians. He has passed all too soon into 'the world within the veil,' and we who are left must now look in vain for his friendship of the friendless, his counsel to the young, his sympathy with those who were maligned or misunderstood. But though the precious presence is no longer within reach, there will ever hover round many of us the lovely and chivalrous spirit of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley.

'Peace : come away : the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song :
Peace : come away : we do him wrong
To sing so wildly : let us go.'



TO
WILLIAM ROGERS,

Rector of St Botolph, Bishopsgate,

THE ENLIGHTENED AND ENERGETIC PROMOTER
OF ALL GOOD WORDS AND DEEDS
IN THE SCHOOLS AND HOMES OF THE POOR,

This joint endeavour

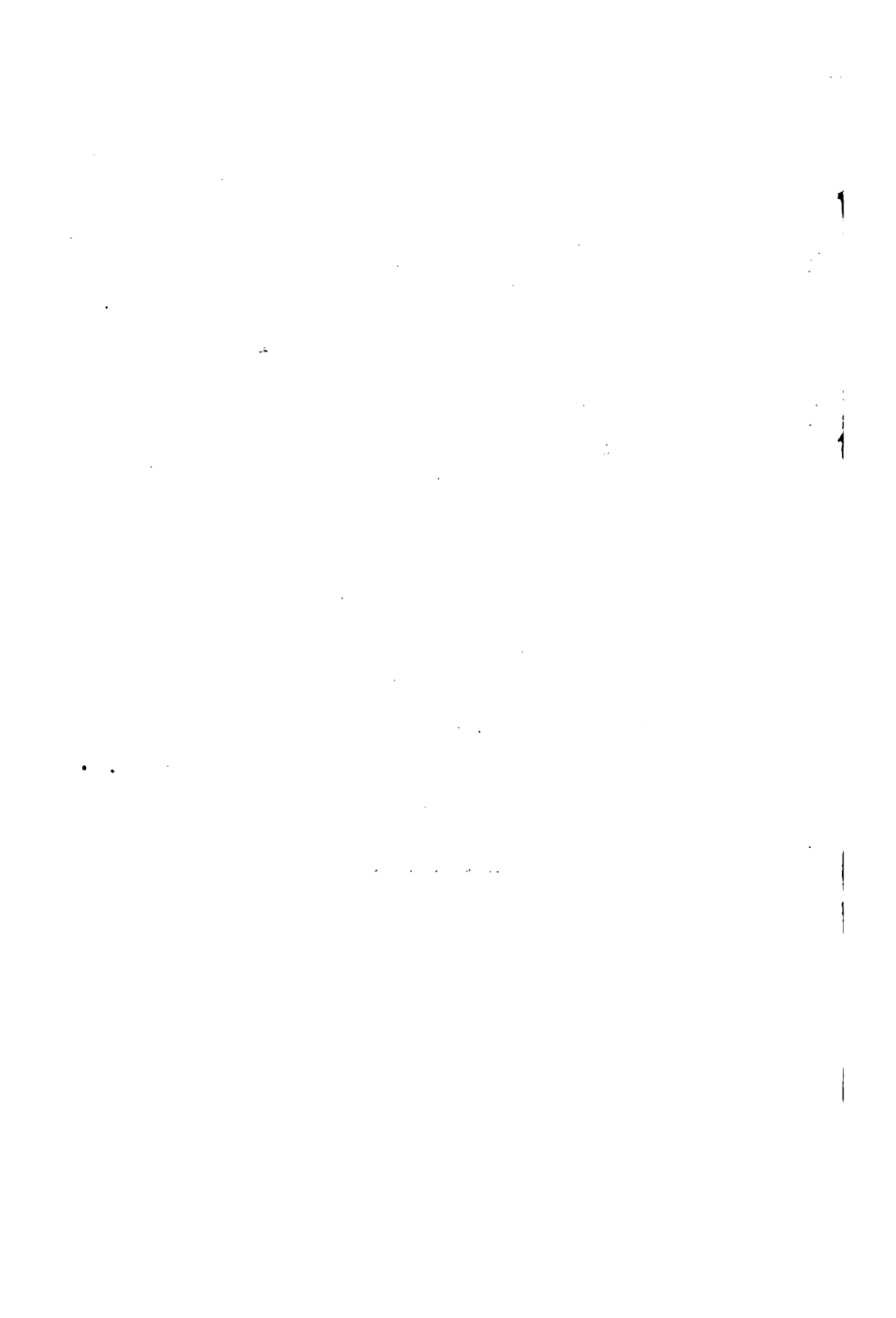
TO UNITE THE HEARTS OF ENGLISHMEN,
IN THE HOPE THAT IT IS NOT UNWORTHY
OF HIS GENEROUS AND COMPREHENSIVE SPIRIT,

Is Dedicated

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF SYMPATHY AND AFFECTION

BY

THE AUTHORS.



PREFACE.

THESE SERMONS were preached in the Church of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, on the Sunday evenings in last Lent. They are now collected into permanent form in response to the wishes of some who, at the time of their delivery, expressed appreciation of their aim. This little book will serve its purpose if it reminds both Churchmen and Dissenters that there is much which it is wise to forget, and more which it is Christian to forgive.

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The Bishop.—Will you maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to your charge?

Answer.—I will so do, the Lord being my helper.—*The Ordering of Priests.*

Of strife and of dissention
Dissolve, O Lord, the bands,
And knit the knots of peace and love
Throughout all Christian lands.
Veni Creator Spiritus in the
Ordination Service.

Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?—*Malachi ii. 4.*

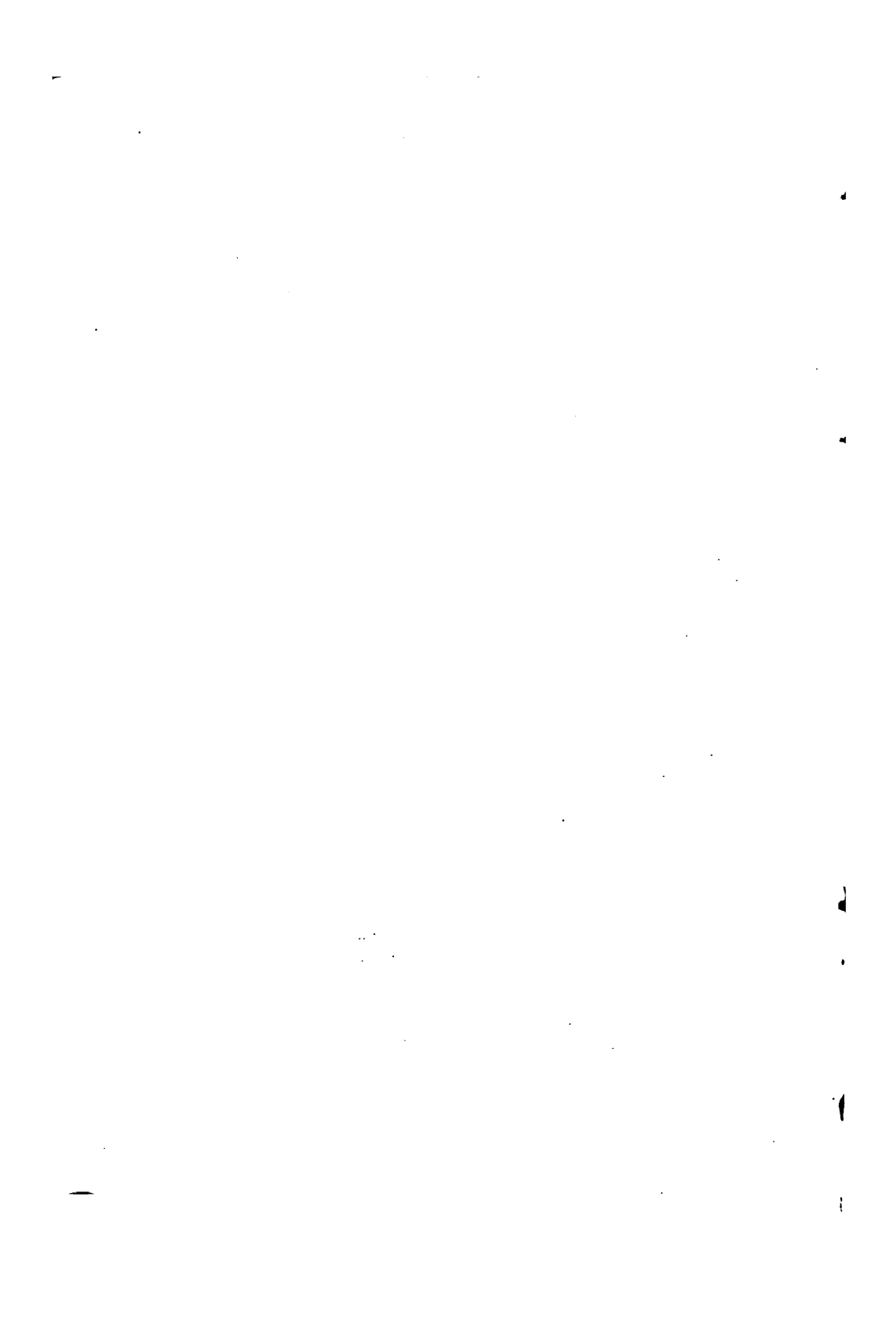
Our little systems have their day :
They have their day and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.
In Memoriam.

I beseech you, my beloved brethren,—I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, to believe that you may be mistaken.—*Oliver Cromwell to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.*

Brothers are brothers evermore,
No distance breaks the tie of blood.
The Christian Year.

There is one grand, all-comprehending church ; and if I am a Christian I belong to it, and no man can shut me out of it.
But it will be all well ; it is all well.—*Dr. Channing.*

Blame not before thou hast examined the truth : understand first, and then rebuke.—*Ecclesiasticus.*



INTRODUCTION.

BY THE DEAN OF WESTMINSTER.



THE ecclesiastical historian Socrates, in a well-known passage, compares the theological controversies of the fifth century to a battle in the night, where each party, from the ignorance of the exact meaning of the terms employed, numbered amongst its adherents foes and friends fighting on the same side. This characteristic of theological struggles, though never perhaps exemplified on the same scale, has prevailed, more or less, ever since ; and it is one of the first duties of any one who seeks the truth to disentangle these confusions, both as a means of arriving at a right conclusion, and also as the best exposition of the futility of many of the party contests that have rent the peace of the Church. A large portion of what is commonly called in popular English parlance 'dogmatic theology' is merely the process of heaping together without definition or discrimination the ambiguous watchwords of those nocturnal struggles—watchwords which, if traced back to their original meaning, may convey some useful information, but which, apart from such historical investigation, are but the signs of unknown things in an unknown language.

There is, however, another evil, incident to ecclesiastical warfare, which may be illustrated by a familiar speech of the Duke of Wellington in regard to actual battles. 'A battle,' he used to say, 'is like a ball: nobody knows what is going on in any other part of the field, except that on which he is himself engaged.' This has been especially the case in most of the works which have been written, and in many of the arguments maintained, on the relations of the Church of England towards the Nonconformists. Each of the contending parties, as a general rule, has fixed its attention only on the particular point on which it was immediately at issue with the opponents of the moment; and has altogether neglected to observe or to take account of the point of view on which its opponents themselves would have laid stress, and of the general relation of both to the religious welfare of the whole nation.

Literature
of the
subject.

It is this point of view which these sermons, contributed by various preachers, under the genial guidance of the Rector of Bishopsgate, are intended to furnish. It is not the first attempt of the kind. Canon Curteis's 'Bampton Lectures' furnished a bright example of an English Churchman deliberately endeavouring to place himself in direct contact with all the different forms of belief that have divided the English ecclesiastical world. A similar endeavour was made by the late lamented Professor Maurice, in his 'Letters on the Kingdom of Christ,' in which he endeavoured to bring the various religious ideas of his time within the scope of his theological survey. In each of these cases there was perhaps too much of a tendency to represent the Church at its ideal

best, and the Nonconformists at their real worst. Too much was made of the actual framework of the Church, and too little of its pervading spirit. There have also appeared several other works in the same direction. One is the most complete conspectus which has yet been given of English theological literature in all its branches—the ‘History of Religious Thought in England,’ by the Rev. John Hunt. It is a book which, without any pretensions to grace of style or fervour of eloquence, yet, by sheer determination to present the exact truth, and by genuine study of the works themselves, produces a picture of all the various streams of theological opinion from the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, which every English ecclesiastic, whether conforming or nonconforming, ought to read, if only as a counterpoise and check to the narrow and imperfect statements which he is in the habit of hearing within his own immediate circle. To include in one survey the whole of this literature—to show how Bacon, Hobbes, Selden, and Locke, no less than the more professed divines, contributed to the sum total of English religious belief—how even Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Tindal, and Toland had their effect in modifying and stimulating devout thought and inquiry on the momentous questions at stake, no less than their more orthodox or Christian opponents—was a task which no one had yet attempted, and which Mr. Hunt has carefully endeavoured to perform. Another work which fills up the outline of this survey in one particular branch, and that branch the most important of all, is the elaborate treatise of Principal Tulloch on the ‘History of

Rational Theology in England.' This is the first systematic account of the long series of divines who, whether under the name of Rational, Platonist, Latitudinarian, or Liberal, have never ceased out of the Church of England from the days of Colet to the days of Milman. The reproduction of these men in bold relief against the background of the ordinary representatives of the Church of England is of an importance transcending any mere historical interest. That this work should have been written, not by an Englishman, but by a distinguished divine of the sister Church of Scotland, adds to its interest. The pleasure with which Principal Tulloch explores this comparatively unknown field communicates itself to his readers, and the academic groves of Oxford and Cambridge are invested with the freshness of a new glory, reflected upon them from the far-off rocky shore of St. Andrews. A like work is the excellent history of Dr. Stoughton, who from a Nonconformist point of view, but with a largeness of charity and a width of knowledge which transcend the bounds of Nonconformity or Churchmanship, has presented a complete account of the Church of England and all its outlying branches from the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century. A fourth work is the excellent history of the eighteenth century written by Mr. Abbey and Mr. Ovington, who have given, with some exceptions, a complete description of the English Church in that period.

Theory of
a National
Church.

In all these works—and in the volume which is here presented to the reader—there is a common idea at the bottom. According to the original theory of the Church

of England, as laid down by the Statutes of the Reformation, and as expounded in splendid language by its most majestic divine in his 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' all Englishmen are supposed to belong to it, to have a claim upon its ministrations, a share in its government, an interest in its welfare. In outward form the constitution thus laid down has, no doubt, been greatly modified; but the works just enumerated are some amongst a thousand proofs that the substantial facts which that theory represented remain the same. It is impossible not to see that in their origin the different Nonconforming sects were but so many parties within the National Church. The idea of separation, of dissidence, of dissent for its own sake, was either altogether unknown in their first beginning, or else was secondary to more fundamental doctrines. It was an accident, so to speak—a series of accidents—often disastrous, untoward, deplorable—that in each case prevented the natural development of those sects or parties in the Church itself. Sometimes the separation was occasioned by mere misunderstanding, more often either by the headstrong vehemence of the seceders, or by the still more headstrong obstinacy of Churchmen. And what still more strongly illustrates this characteristic of the Nonconforming portions of the Church is the fact, on which hardly sufficient stress has been laid, that the dominant sections within the Church have been at times as little disposed to conformity, and have had their course marked by an exclusiveness of thought exactly analogous to that of those who have actually separated. There is no doubt that the powerful party, which has represented

Separation
from it.

the most directly antagonistic element to the various Nonconforming sections, has from first to last borne upon its face the marks of a struggling, aggressive school, which, beginning with a standing-place exceedingly insecure—at times altogether lost—was always in danger of being forced into a hostile and separatist condition, had the rulers of the Church shown as much intolerant energy as the school itself displayed. Nay, on one occasion this separation did actually occur. During the whole of the last century there was a Nonconformist body in England, which contained within itself exactly the corresponding elements to those which exist amongst the sects more commonly so called. Lord Macaulay has in a few powerful pages¹ delineated their beginning, middle, and end. The Episcopal Non-jurors, leaving the Church at the time of the Revolution, and equalling in acrimony against it the most violent Puritan or Anabaptist, lingered even until our own time, and were last seen by living persons in the town of Shrewsbury in the beginning of this century. Unfortunately, it had hardly died away on the outskirts of the Church when it revived again within its pale, and from 1833 has, with different degrees of success, established itself with an imperious tenacity which has frequently tended to distract the Church from its proper mission of practical usefulness or intellectual inquiry; and, though with some individual examples of lofty character, and many of devoted zeal, has always shown the true character of its schismatic origin in the desire

¹ *History of England*, vol. iii. pp. 454-467.

to claim for itself the whole field of Christian thought and Christian life.

The common ground of antagonism held by all these various sections, with the possible exceptions of the Quakers and the Unitarians, lay in two fixed persuasions : first, that they could discover in the New Testament, or at any rate in the apostolical traditions, a complete, rigid, exact system of doctrine, ritual, and constitution ; and, secondly, that it was their paramount duty to impose this system upon the Church of their own country, if not on all the Churches of Christendom. Unless we grasp this fundamental fallacy through all its different branches, we shall have failed to perceive the true aspect of the questions which then agitated and still agitate the English ecclesiastical mind. There can be no question that Congregationalism for the one, and Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions for the other, were believed to be the very 'pattern of the Mount,' and therefore the one immoveable exemplar of Christian society. The Baptists, again, perceiving, and in this instance rightly perceiving, what no modern scholar can possibly dispute, that baptism by immersion was the universal practice, and the baptism of adults, if not the universal, at least the general custom of the apostolic and following periods, equally sprang to the conclusion that this was to be the one unalterable form in all the ages that were to follow. The Roman Catholics also were under the sway of the same illusion. They conceived the hypothesis that the diocesan system, with bishops, metropolitans, and patriarchs, was in existence in the first century, and that a supremacy of jurisdiction was then granted to the

The counter theory of Puritans and Non-jurors.

Bishop of Rome over all the other sees of the Roman Empire. They followed out this hypothesis by another no less strange, that the system so established was intended to exist for all perpetuity. It is needless to point out that during the whole of St. Peter's lifetime there never was, nor could have been, a bishop at Rome—that even if there had been, St. Peter could not have been that bishop, much less the founder of that Church. But even granting, what history absolutely forbids us to grant, that such a patriarchate existed in the Church or the first century, the supposition that it was an indispensable and inalienable part of the Christian religion is merely another phase of the same form of belief that constitutes the essence of the Presbyterian, or the Independent, or the Baptist theory of Church government. The extreme Puritan and the extreme Roman systems equally presuppose the absolutely irrational principle that an external polity existing in times totally different from our own must of necessity be applicable to all subsequent ages; equally presuppose the exclusively divine and sacred character of institutions in their own nature essentially temporal and secular.

And when from these outlying sections we turn to the leaders of the hierarchical party within the Church itself, it is no less true of them that they had also first created an unhistorical theory of the primitive Church constitution, and, secondly, drawn the unwarrantable inference that such a constitution must be eternal. The Non-jurors, with their predecessors and successors, were as firmly persuaded that bishops, presbyters, and deacons, with liturgical forms, existed in

the times of the New Testament, as the Roman Catholics that St. Peter was the founder and Bishop of the Church of Rome, the Independents that every Church had its own separate government, or the Presbyterians that the platform of the Apostles consisted of presbyters, lay elders, and deacons. And all the vehement contentions of the high Episcopalian party in England against communion or fellowship with the Reformed Churches on the Continent, with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, or with their Nonconformist brethren in England, arose from the persuasion that what they thus believed themselves to have found in the pages of the New Testament was to be for ever binding on the universal Church.

The whole system of these complicated but homogeneous illusions has been totally set aside by two master principles, one of which was proclaimed at the very outset of the establishment of the Church of England; the other has been worked out by the slow and gradual process of research and criticism. It was proclaimed by Hooker, in answer to the Puritans of his time, that it is alike contrary to the Divine laws which regulate the natural government of the world, and to the fundamental principles of the Christian Revelation, to suppose that positive laws and ordinances, laid down even in the Bible itself, were of necessity to be imposed on all the different generations of mankind through all the different modifications of their existence. To insist on such a perpetuity of merely external forms was, according to that great divine, to confound together the essential and the unessential, the temporal and the eternal, which it had been one main object of the Christian religion to

place in the proper relative position of the paramount importance of the one, and the complete subordination and indifference of the other. With this principle of Hooker, all the pretensions to exclusive perpetuity, whether Roman, Puritan, or Episcopal, go at once to the ground. The second position which true theology has effectually established is derived from the results of the discriminating scholarship of the last two hundred years, namely, that the apostolic traditions and the records of the New Testament contain no such fixed form as any of these theories would demand ; that if here and there we find the germs of that which was developed in later centuries into gigantic proportions, yet in the apostolic age they co-existed in such a chaotic, uncertain, conflicting state, that any attempt to reproduce them now as they existed then, would be to evoke an apparition in this nineteenth century from which Roman and Presbyterian and Independent and Anglican would alike recoil with horror.

It might have been supposed that the fallacious positions taken up both by the original Puritans and their extreme opponents had been sufficiently dispelled by the action of the two principles just mentioned. But, although their form is in some degree modified, the likeness of their general attitude is still visible in the same distorted representations of Christian truth as appeared in other shapes two centuries ago. It may be that there are very few either in England or Scotland who would wish to impose Presbyterianism or Independency, as a matter of Divine right, upon the whole empire. But another claim, equally exclusive, and penetrated by

the same fallacy, has entered into the place of the ancient demon which has long since been cast out. It is now urged, with a tenacity and a vehemence almost equal to that of the old Puritans, that another dogma no less vital to the interests of true religion than Presbyterianism, or Independency, or Anti-Pædobaptism in earlier times, has dawned upon the Nonconformist mind. This new dogma, which to the first Reformers and the first founders of Nonconformity was almost if not altogether unknown, is the unlawfulness of a National Church, the sinfulness of endowments, the abomination of any public recognition or control of religion and of the mixture of things secular with things spiritual, the contamination produced on any form of religion by its connection with government and law. This dogma is, like those earlier claims to which reference has been made, founded, first, on the supposition that such a complete separation is to be traced in the Church of the Apostolic age; and, secondly, on the inference that such a form of society, if it existed, was intended to be the universal expression of the Christian world.

It is certain that, as far as was possible in a state of things so entirely unlike our own, the Apostles and their first followers had not the slightest shrinking from contact with the great institutions of the Roman Empire; that there is not in their writings the slightest trace of that repugnance to the ordinances of law and government which in later days has come to be regarded by some persons as the chief article of religion.

It is certain also that even if such a repugnance had been manifest in the apostolic times, and granting what,

of course, is undeniable, the distinction which necessarily existed between the nascent Christian Church and the old heathen society in the midst of which it found itself, there is yet not the slightest reason to justify us in transferring from the primitive to a later age conditions which, by the nature of the case, cannot be equally applicable to both. St. Paul, it has been sometimes urged, knew nothing of Parliaments and parishes, nothing of bishops in the House of Lords, or of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. It is equally true, and equally relevant, to say that St. Paul knew nothing of the steam-engine or the electric light.

But it is not without its use to point out the analogy of the dogma of a separate religion with the more purely antiquarian dogmas of the older Puritan or sacerdotal parties. The present leaders of the Nonconformist body are, no doubt, perfectly justified, if they will, in maintaining for themselves this dogma and its consequences; but when it is found that, not content with having secured the most complete toleration of their own view in this matter, they endeavour to impose it on all the world—when it is found that their main object is to insist on a uniformity of the voluntary system with as much pertinacity as their fathers insisted on the uniformity of Presbyterianism, or as their adversaries insisted in the seventeenth century on the uniformity of Episcopacy—it is evident that we meet again the old foe whom Hooker opposed, and who seemed to have fallen at last under the hands of Locke, now reappearing with a new face, but almost with the same weapons. It is at once disappointing to our best hopes, and unworthy

of the age in which we live, that a fresh intolerance should thus be encouraged to take the place of the old intolerance which we trusted was dead and buried.

Thus much, when the question is regarded from a Nonconformist point of view. But it must not be dissembled that the tendency assumes a graver aspect when it is apparent that a counter form of exclusiveness has meanwhile developed itself among those who have been already designated as the Nonconformists, not without but within the Church of England—that party which, having been dormant almost from the time of the secession of the Non-jurors, revived in a spirit of extreme reaction against the Liberal progress of the age, with all the acrimony, and with much of the power, of the ancient Jacobites, in the movement known by the name of the Oxford or Tractarian school. Here it is not only the old enemy under a new form, but the old enemy itself, that has again reared its head. All the arguments in behalf of the exclusive right of Episcopacy, the exclusive virtue of the Sacraments, the indispensable necessity of an Episcopal succession, the contempt and hostility manifested towards all the more purely Protestant Churches, whether at home or abroad ; all these, which marked the efforts first of Laud, and then of the chiefs of the Non-jurors, have now, during the last forty years, once more established a footing within the National Church. The National Church, after various struggles against this invasion, sometimes conducted by the lawful weapons of learning and argument, sometimes by the unlawful weapons of coercion and repression, has now for some time past acquiesced in the existence of this

sect within its bosom. This acquiescence is the inevitable consequence at once of the constitution of the English Church, and of the dictates of charity and reason. But within the last fifteen years this section of the Church, not content with toleration, has claimed an exclusive possession of the whole field, with as much vehemence and as much pretension as that with which their adversaries in the Puritan camp demand it for themselves. They correspond within the English Church to the Ultramontane school in the Roman Catholic Church, which Dr. Newman in his celebrated letter to Bishop Ullathorne described as 'an insolent and aggressive faction;' forming in reality a small, though energetic portion of the whole body, but claiming to represent the Church itself, and endeavouring to suppress all forms of belief but its own.

It is, however, a curious feature of the controversy, almost peculiar to our time, that the sacerdotal and the Puritan forms of intolerance have, by a natural affinity, formed what, in outward shape and at first sight, would have seemed the most unnatural alliance. The modern Non-jurors and Ultramontanes, like the modern Non-conformists, have conceived a mortal hostility to that large and more comprehensive view of Christian truth which is represented by the Established Church, and which, though not so persistently, yet in their occasional paroxysms of anger or fear, they, equally with the Puritan party, are bent, if possible, on levelling to the ground.

It is desirable that this combination of forces should be thoroughly understood. There is hardly a meeting

of the Liberation Society, hardly an expression of opinion from any of its leading members, which does not appeal for support to the most sacerdotal and the most exclusive of all the tendencies which the Church of England contains. Almost the only life which they consent to acknowledge in the English Church, they attribute, not to the Evangelical, not to the Liberal, not to the steadfast, dutiful, and unostentatious elements which form the bulk of the National Church, but to the noisy and turbulent, though, doubtless, after their manner, zealous and self-denying, partisans of the Oxford school. Not Arnold, not Whately, not Milman, not Frederick Robertson, not Frederick Maurice, not Cecil, nor Venn, nor Simeon, but John Henry Newman, the chief of that retrograde and exclusive movement, though filled, as he himself describes, 'with fierce thoughts' against the liberal tendencies of the age, is hailed by them as the English Churchman to whom they look with the greatest admiration. They are, of course, not insensible to the claims of genius, learning, and zeal which he shares with the other leaders of religious thought who have just been enumerated ; but the distinction which specially commends him to their notice is, obviously, his antipathy to Erastianism and his separation from the Establishment.

Such is the attitude which the two factions within and without the Church assume towards their common parent. That the alliance thus cemented would be rent into pieces if their temporary object could be accomplished, is too evident to need argument. No one would assume a more haughty and hostile attitude towards the Presbyterians and Independents than those to whom

the Divine and exclusive claim of Episcopal Sacraments is as dear as their hostility to the control of law and to the value of patriotism. The great historical and national edifices of the Church of England, if turned into merely private conventicles, and if occupied, as they might well be, by the zealots who even now shrink from the slightest contact in religious ministrations with their Nonconforming brethren, would become hermetically sealed against those who now claim, and justly claim, a part in those glorious inheritances.

Hopes of
a better
prospect.

But the object of these sermons is to bring out what are the elements which, not in the polemical portions of religious society, but in the more quiet, pacific, and reasonable spheres, furnish a substantial ground for the hope of better things.

It has been that with regard to the Non-juring element in the Church of England the true policy of the Church is not, and ought not to be, suppression, but toleration combined with full liberty for development of the more Protestant and liberal tendencies within its pale. In like manner, the true policy with regard to the Nonconforming elements outside the pale is not either repression, which indeed belongs altogether to the past, nor even absorption into the Church itself, but a full recognition of the value, the excellence, in some instances the almost indispensable necessity, of such forms of ecclesiastical government, of religious doctrine, of practical organisation, as the Nonconformist communities supply. It is not a question of equality. The Nonconformist is, usually, as proud of his Nonconformity as a Churchman can be of his Churchmanship. A voluntary Church and

Use of
Noncon-
formity.

an Established Church each have their own peculiar merits and defects, as the policy of a select company or a self-chosen association differs from the policy of a State or of an Empire. A great Nonconformist of the last generation, Robert Hall, has described in an eloquent passage the mutual services which the conflicting factors of Christian life in England render to each other, and has pointed his warning by the example of the stagnation and decay into which the Gallican Church fell after it had succeeded in expelling from France every vestige of Huguenot descent. Just in the same way as we complain of the blind zeal which stimulates some leading Nonconformists, which would wish to sweep away every witness to a larger, more national Christianity than is possible in a congeries of small narrow sects, so it would be lamentable if any attempt were made on the part of the Church of England to obliterate those standing testimonies which the different branches of Nonconformity have borne to truths that from time to time have faded away, or have never been developed, in the Church itself.

How essentially English are these different forms is sufficiently proved by the fact that they have spread hardly at all to any nations outside the Anglo-Saxon race. The Church of England is sometimes reproached with the fact that it is an insular institution ; and Nonconformists themselves have sometimes echoed a reproach which, as a practical proof of its suitability to the English temperament, is, in fact, one of its greatest praises. But it is equally true that Independency exists nowhere except in England and the United States ;

that the Baptists, though they began in Germany, have struck root only in England and its dependencies ; that the Wesleyans, although their religious life produced, no doubt, a revival in the Protestant Churches of France and Geneva, are, as an ecclesiastical body, confined entirely to the same local atmosphere ; that Quakers and even Unitarians, as separate sects, exist nowhere in the Continent, and only in a limited degree even in Scotland. It is the national character of English Non-conformity which ought to make the Church feel that its dissenting children are truly its own members ; that in this respect the theory of Hooker is true in a deeper and more permanent sense than that in which he intended it ; that these great religious divergences are the outgrowth of peculiarly English characteristics, and form part of the bone and sinew of the country.

And if the course of history illustrate the English tendencies common to all these different sects, it may no less clearly prove their common Christianity. The piety of Baxter and Calamy, the philanthropy of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, the spiritual refinement of Firmin and of John James Tayler, the apostolic energy of Wesley and his followers, the missionary zeal of Carey, Marshman, Ellis, and Williams, are sufficient indications of this to all who have eyes to see or ears to hear the signs of Christian life beyond the borders of their own immediate experience.

Latitudi-
narian
theology.

This is the point where it may fairly be asked to what quarter of the past or future history of the English Church we are to look for such a spirit as will admit and conciliate these common elements of national and

religious vitality—for the method by which they might still be utilised for the benefit of the whole nation, without giving each of them, or any of them, that exclusive predominance which at least some of their members are now anxious to secure. And here surely it is not so much in the framework of the English Church as in the inward temper and attitude of thought which it contains or may contain, that the remedy is to be looked for. The remedy is to be looked for in that school of theology which in a recent 'Chart of Religious Thought' is noted as too insignificant to be spoken of, but which is in fact the marrow of the Church of England.

It has been too much the custom to regard the Church of England as chiefly represented, partly by its Prayer-book and its Articles, partly by the forward polemics who, in different periods, have occupied the chief ranks of its ecclesiastical phalanx. But what Principal Tulloch has well brought out is the fact that behind these has been, almost from the first, a large, diffusive, expansive, progressive school of Christian thought which refuses to be numbered with any of the contending factions that have raged within or without the Church; which refuses to be ranked as a party itself, or to call any man 'Master;' but which, nevertheless, has formed the backbone of the National Church through all its varying vicissitudes, the life-blood which has nourished it, and kept it alive, when it was well-nigh perishing of the fever or the consumption brought on by the activities or the failings of its other constituent elements. It began¹ even before the

¹ See the excellent delineation of these men in *Oxford Reformers of the Sixteenth Century*, by Frederick Seebohm.

Reformation, in the friends of Erasmus, such as Dean Colet and Sir Thomas More. It found its most impressive oracle in the mouth of Richard Hooker. It sprang into new life under the fostering care of the noblest and most attractive of all characters that figure in our great civil wars. Under the auspices of Lord Falkland, in the lovely vale of Great Tew, described in one of the most pathetic passages of Clarendon's life, were gathered together Hales and Chillingworth, and all that was most philosophic in moderation and most natural and simple in religion, from the neighbouring University of Oxford. The charming essay of Matthew Arnold is alone sufficient to glorify the name of Lord Falkland as rising above what Chillingworth called the Pharisees on one side, and the Publicans on the other, of his own age and as appealing to the best wants of our own. Sir Matthew Hale would alone suffice to hand on the sacred torch¹ across the Commonwealth; and after the Restoration the succession was carried on by a yet more illustrious group in the sister University of Cambridge—the 'Platonists'—the 'Men of Latitude,' as they are put before us in the pages of Burnet, whose pedestrian style and homely common sense are warmed with a divine enthusiasm, as he describes the effect produced upon him by Tillotson, Cudworth, Whichcote, Henry More, John Smith, and Worthington. That succession has never entirely failed; and its very existence for so

¹ The connection of Sir Matthew Hale with the Latitudinarian school is not mentioned by Principal Tulloch, but is well brought out by Dr. Stoughton (*Ecclesiastical History of Restoration*, ii. 478-481). See also his striking quotations from Faringdon, ii. 339-341.

long a period is a pledge that the Church of England is capable of supporting and sending forth those who, from a wider point of view, and from a more generous appreciation of the excellences of contending sects, can afford to allow each one of them a place in the Divine economy of the Church, and in the national fabric of the English religious commonwealth.

This volume proposes briefly to enumerate the ideas or characteristic qualities which the Nonconformist branches of the Church may, when viewed in this larger national aspect, be regarded as having contributed to the general good. The Independents have almost from their first origin stood forward as the champions, at a time when such championship within the Church itself was sorely needed, of civil liberty and freedom of conscience. Their hold on English history is also beyond question. One name at least they have furnished to it of transcendent importance—the Protector, Oliver Cromwell. The Baptists vindicated, in ways and forms peculiar to themselves, the essential value of the purity and moral excellence of the Christian Church as the only characteristics which will avail to render its ministrations efficacious. The refusal to administer the Sacraments indiscriminately, the maintenance of a severe interior discipline which divides the Church from the congregation, although condemned in the judgment of a higher Christianity, even amongst the Nonconformists themselves, as altogether misleading and artificial, yet may, if regarded only as one form of Christian life amongst many, keep before the conscience of the country a perpetual testimony to the fact, which members of

The Inde-
pendents.

The Bap-
tists.

The Qua-
kers.

large traditional communities are apt to forget, that the outward does not carry with it the inward, and that the multitudinous mass is only to be regenerated by the grains of a revivifying salt amongst the chosen few. They also have furnished one name at least to English literature which Lord Macaulay has not hesitated to place side by side with Milton: 'The seventeenth century,' he says, 'produced only two works of surpassing genius; one was the "Paradise Lost," the other was Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."' The Quakers or Friends, as was remarked long ago even by Voltaire, stand in one respect honourably distinguished amongst all Christian sects, namely, in that they place before themselves as the main object of their existence, not the propagation of any peculiar opinion or the maintenance of any peculiar form, but the moral regeneration of humanity.¹ The protest against the terrible evils of war and of slavery, the testimony in behalf of simplicity of speech and living—these were to them what the quarrels for or against the surplice, for or against this or that theory respecting the eucharistic elements, have been in the other Churches both of Catholic and Protestant Christendom. And of all the founders of the States in the New World the one whose name, in spite of the darker clouds that have occasionally passed over it, has come down to us with the widest lustre, is the Quaker, William Penn. The Unitarians have had the rare merit of sustaining, at great odds and amidst all manner of social disadvantages, the spirit of free inquiry and critical

The Uni-
tarians.

¹ I may refer to an admirable article on the Friends both in England and America, written in French, the work of an accomplished English lady.

discernment, which in the other nonconforming communities was hardly developed at all, and which in the Church itself needed constant replenishment. What there is of narrowness in their body is felt by their own most distinguished leaders as much as by others. 'In devotional literature and religious thought,' says the most refined and venerable of their ministers,¹ 'I find nothing of ours that does not pale before Augustin, Tauler, and Pascal; and in the poetry of the Church it is the Latin and German hymns, or the lines of Charles Wesley or of Keble, that fasten on my memory, and make all else seem poor and cold.' But, however much the exaggerations or the meagreness of their theological schemes have aroused a repulsion in the more devotional or the more dogmatic sections of Christian society, it must always be remembered that they have kept in check exaggerations and contractions at least as mischievous as any which are found amongst themselves. 'It was,' says a great German Catholic theologian,² 'the rude and mechanical Calvinistic conception of the Atonement, and the opposing of the Divine Persons like parties in a lawsuit, which by a natural reaction turned the Puritan theologians and preachers of the eighteenth century into Unitarians.' They, too, have names which redeem their sect from the obscurity to which otherwise it seems to have been doomed. They included at least on their borders Sir Isaac Newton and John Locke in England, and in America they have produced the one theologian of the English-speaking races (till quite

¹ The Rev. James Martineau's Letter on the Unitarian Position.

² Döllinger, *The Church and the Churches*, p. 239.

The Wesleyans.

recent times) whose fame has pervaded the Continent—William Channing. The Wesleyans, perhaps, amongst all these bodies are those who have least claim to be considered as an element separate from the Church itself. No extenuations or explanations of his later disciples can remove the overwhelming impression left by the repeated declarations of their founder, that not only would he himself never desert the Church of his fathers, but that continuance with it and attachment to it were the essential conditions of the prosperity and progress of his followers. What they contributed to the development of Christianity in England—the Christianity equally of the Church itself and of all Nonconformist branches—was the growth of a religious zeal, the encouragement of a religious energy, which broke through the calm repose—often the apathetic indifference—that pervaded all sections of English life at the beginning of the last century. And this revival, with all its distortions and extravagances, was not confined, like most of the other influences of which we have spoken, to England and America, but penetrated to the continental Churches, and produced among the Protestants of France, Switzerland, and Germany a revival of warmth and zeal, if also at times of bigotry and narrowness, of which the effects are still visible. The one historical figure of the Wesleyan Society is not any accidental or exceptional member of its body, as in the other Nonconformist sections, but is the character of the founder himself. Robert Brown, the founder of the Independents; John Spilsbury,¹ the founder of the Baptists; John Biddle, the

¹ Cramp's *Baptist History*, p. 288.

first English Unitarian ; even George Fox, the founder of the Friends, are comparatively insignificant personages by the side of some of their disciples ; but John Wesley was incomparably greater than all those who have since borne his name ; and alike in the judgment of the most clear-judging contemporaries, and of an impartial posterity, he must be considered one of the most lofty and venerable figures which English Christendom has ever produced ; and his career, extending as it does along the whole course of the eighteenth century, is in itself sufficient to redeem that much-abused age from the indiscriminating charge of incredulity and indifference.

Such is the outline of institutions each of which has a history of its own, filled with incidents, some as interesting and instructive as many are 'stale, flat, and unprofitable.' These are the chief elements which it is the mission of the English Church to assimilate, to appropriate, to comprehend, and to conciliate. It has already been indicated that mere absorption, even were it possible, is not of itself the most desirable or the most certainly fruitful of great results. As we deprecate the intolerant aggression on the part of the Nonconformists, which, by levelling all that is peculiar in the English Church, would in fact remove the wholesome counteraction which they themselves need, so also would we deprecate any course of action on the part of the Church which should deprive it of the co-existence and co-operation of those valuable ingredients of religion which we have just enumerated. 'I am no visionary,' said the Primate in a recent charge, 'looking forward to a time when all the

various denominations throughout Britain are to come and desire admission into the Church of England.' Those who conscientiously prefer Presbyterianism or Independency will, of course, not accept Episcopacy or the parochial system. Those who object to endowments and establishments will not attach themselves under any circumstances to an endowed or established institution. But, as the Primate adds, 'if we show in all things where we can, without any compromise of principle, a hearty spirit of Christian love, there is every hope that in Christ's good time the differences that keep us apart may disappear.'

Ap-
proaches
to union.

When we are asked to name some practicable approaches which, without destroying the different peculiarities of the Church and its nonconforming branches, shall at the same time bridge over the gulfs which needlessly yawn between them, it is not difficult to indicate obvious measures, some of which at least have already received the attention of the Legislature.

There is the question of changes in the liturgical forms of the English Church, such as were in part proposed by the Royal Commission on Ritual, and in part have been already carried into action, and which, being thus acknowledged in principle, are capable of indefinite extension. Most of these changes are such as would be desirable, even were there not a single Dissenter in existence; but the argument in their behalf is immeasurably increased when it is felt that the evils which they propose to remedy are not only evils in themselves, but causes of wide-spread offence and estrangement.

It is here that the Non-juring spirit within the Church itself presents the most formidable obstacles. The ecclesiastical Puritans, like their Nonconformist allies, are determined to allow of no changes but those which run in one direction, and that direction the one most pleasing to themselves, even though it be the most offensive to all besides. It is in the Lower House of the Southern Convocation, as is well known, that this obstructive party has chiefly entrenched itself; and their position has become the more dangerous from the pretensions, put forward for the first time during the last few years, to a veto on all ecclesiastical legislation. Some of the most necessary changes were fortunately carried before these claims had reached their present preposterous height, or at least before they had received any encouragement from higher authority. Such was the removal of the political services for the 30th of January and the 29th of May, in which the Convocation of the Restoration expressed the passions of the violent reaction of that time. They were happily abolished by Parliament without the slightest reference to the body which had drawn them up, and which, in its modern representatives, would never have originated the alteration. Such, again, was the relaxation of the terms of subscription, which Convocation had steadily opposed, and to which it consented at last only when it became evident that the change was itself embodied in a Bill which would become law whether they assented to it or not. Such, again, was the reformation of the Calendar of Lessons, which received an almost universal welcome in the country, but was carried through the Lower House

Changes
in Liturgy.

Abolition
of the Con-
vocation
Services.

Relaxation
of Sub-
scription.

Reformed
Calendar
of Lessons.

of Convocation in defiance of the most strenuous opposition, and only by a doubtful vote. It is necessary to dwell for a moment on this cause of obstruction, both in order to vindicate the Church at large from a charge which applies only to an exceptional phase of its history, and also to show what would be the kind of government which the Church would have to expect if those of its members who wish for a separation from the State were to get the reins into their own hands.

This spasmodic kind of opposition, fortified by the apathy or the connivance of those Nonconformists who dread the improvement of an institution which they wish to destroy, will, it may be feared, be offered to all similar remedial measures, which yet, if carried, would meet with general assent. Such, for example, is that which is strongly pressed with all the weight of pastoral experience—the relaxation of the rubric which enjoins the use of sponsors in baptism even on those who are least willing to employ them, or least able to understand the complicated origin of the system. Such, again, is the relaxation of the rule which enforces the public recitation of the Athanasian Creed—the single example in which the Church of England has retained in its formularies the old anathematising and exclusive spirit of the Church of the middle ages¹—a relaxation

Relaxation
of Rubric
on Spon-
sors :

Of Rubric
on Atha-
nasian
Creed.

¹ On the subject of the damnable clauses of the Athanasian Creed may be mentioned four charges of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Manchester, the late Bishop Thirlwall, and the Bishop of Peterborough. The objections of practical common sense cannot be more clearly expressed than in the first two : the analysis of profound learning and subtle irony, the invective of eloquent indignation and searching logic, cannot go further than in the last two. To these add the

adopted by the Church of Ireland and by the Episcopal Church of America, demanded by both Primates, by the most learned, the most eloquent, the most active, the most popular of our prelates, and by 3,000 clergy, including nearly all those who have most interest in the education of the country, and by the repugnance or the contempt of an immense majority of the laity. It is still opposed by the party of obstruction; but even amongst these, very rarely from a belief in the denunciations which it contains, rather with a studied avowal of disbelief in them, combined with a desire to retain and repeat words from which all or almost all their sense has been carefully ejected.

Such, again, are relaxations in the general framework of the Prayer-book, so as to allow of greater variety, condensation, and freedom. Some of these have been passed into law; and with far more facility in fact than has been the case with those sections of the Church in the colonies which have been reconstructed, more or less, on the voluntary principle. All these alterations—and many more which might be named—whilst they would not of necessity draw any large body of Nonconformists within the pale, nevertheless would remove obstacles which stand in the way at least of their occasional conformity, and therefore of their occasional contact with

renunciation of any meaning which the anathemas may contain, in the sermon preached by Dr. Pusey, at Oxford, on December 1, 1872. A formulary which has been exposed to such assaults both from its enemies and its friends may continue to exist, but it has ceased to live, or to possess any claim on our respect. The feeling towards it, on the part even of the 'Orthodox' Dissenters, may be inferred from the speech of one of their leaders, who in a conference a few years ago at Birmingham put it forward as one of the chief arguments for the destruction of the Church.

that loftier standard of devotion which it should be the object of the National Church to foster and disseminate.

Inter-
change of
pulpits.

And again, in the Church of Scotland it has been found possible, without the slightest breach of ecclesiastical order, or compromise of principle on either side, for prelates and dignitaries of the Church of England to preach in the Presbyterian pulpits of humble Highland villages, of great academical institutions, and of churches consecrated by every sacred recollection of ancient Scottish Presbyterianism. Is it unreasonable to ask that the same liberty which the State and the Church have freely allowed in Scotland should be conceded in England? Not a single ancient ecclesiastical principle would be violated, not a single tradition of the early Reformed Church of England would be broken, if from time to time this were done, with the checks which in the English Church, from its multiplicity of authorities, might be far more easily contrived. The leading preachers, both of the Presbyterian North and of the Nonconforming South, might be invited to lend their special gifts for the edification of the congregations which now hang by thousands on the lips of the eloquent pastors of the National Church, and which on that very account would be well prepared to receive whatever benefit might be conferred, and guarded from any injury that might be apprehended, at the hands of less familiar teachers.

Burials
Act.

Two most important acts have taken place within the last year, which simplify the possibility of co-operation between the Church and its Nonconforming children. One is the Burials Act, carried by the persistent energy of the two Primates against a host of

Church objections, which have, however, melted away in the presence of an accomplished fact. The proposal of Mr. Pearson for the joint use of the churchyard and church at Sonning is an admirable example not only of difficulties overcome, but of pacification introduced by the passing of the Act. The other is the Revised Version, which was the joint work of all scholars to whatever religious communion they belonged. The Church of England, no doubt, furnished the core and kernel of the body; but distinguished scholars were selected, here and in America, from among Presbyterians, Methodists, Independents, Baptists, and Unitarians, and in England this combination was cemented at its commencement by the joint partaking in the Holy Communion of the Lord's Supper in Westminster Abbey.

Revised
Version.

Again, in the wide field of social intercourse and of general co-operation in Christian objects, may we not hope that a time might come when the barriers which exist, not by law but merely by etiquette, custom, fashion, might melt away in a more enlarged consideration of what is due from the central Church to its outlying offshoots? In every parish it is surely not too much to hope that every clergyman should regard the Nonconformist minister of the Nonconformist portion of his flock, not as an enemy, but as a friend, able to reach those whom he cannot reach, supplying ministrations which he cannot supply, just as his own special ministrations would often in like manner be acknowledged and recognised. If one more example may be taken from the Church of the Northern kingdom, the case has been known of a Presbyterian minister of the parish, who, whilst availing himself, on the most friendly terms, of the

ministrations of a Roman Catholic priest for the humble Roman Catholic peasants that happened to be placed within the borders of his jurisdiction, yet was himself, in all the more ordinary consolations of pastoral life, called in by those very peasants to give the instructions which they felt they could not equally gain from their own less instructed priest. The division of labour, the unity of sentiment, exhibited in so extreme a case, possibly has often been seen, and might always be seen, in the far less antagonistic relations of the English clergy towards the Nonconformists.

Abolition
of abuses.

It is a saying trite even to wearisomeness, that in these days institutions can only exist in proportion to their proved efficacy and capacity for growth and amelioration. Of no institutions is this so true as of those which, by their connection with religion, pretend to a higher ideal than belongs to the mass of human ordinances; and of religious institutions there is none to which this so much applies as to a Church which, by claiming to be national, claims the support and sympathy of the whole nation. Every ramification which connects the Church with English society is a source, not, as the Puritan and sacerdotal schools would affirm, of weakness, but of strength. What it has to dread is not the oppression or interference of the laity, but their contempt and indifference, which is the cankerworm of the Catholic Church in France, Spain, and Italy. It was said, at the time of the fire in Canterbury Cathedral, that one chief cause of the rapid spread of the conflagration was the accumulation of rubbish, straw, sticks, nests of every kind, which the birds of successive generations had stored or left in the capacious vacancies of that forest of

ancient timber. This is a true parable of the peril which besets a venerable institution such as the English Church. It consists in the gradual growth of old abuses—of forms which have lost their meaning, which are innocuous in ordinary times, but in moments of excitement furnish the most dangerous combustibles. These are the dry fuel on which in such seasons the spark of popular passion falls, and the gust of party violence fans the flame, and the whole institution is exposed to ruin. It is to clear out these elements of destruction that the energies alike of all Liberal and of all Conservative Churchmen should be engaged. Amongst the wise maxims scattered through Sir Arthur Helps's 'Thoughts on Government' there is none more clearly and usefully worked out than that in which he insists on the constant need of the class—the rare class—not of Destroyers nor of Defenders, but of Improvers. The true Church defenders are the Church reformers, and the true Church destroyers are those who resist all attempts at change and improvement. 'I am sure,' said the late Bishop Thirlwall, 'that the clergyman who is labouring most diligently in his appointed sphere, is the most efficient member of the Church of England Defence Institution, whether his name appear in the roll of its associates or not. I am equally sure that no one is doing the work of the Liberation Society more effectually than one who neglects his duties, lowers his ministerial character, and forfeits the affection and respect of his people.'

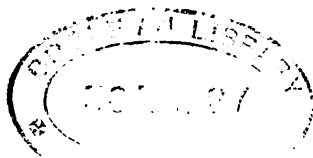
What is said here of the great mass of ordinary ministrations is equally true of the larger questions which call for legislation, and which affect the beneficial working of the whole institution.

To sum up all that has been said, in the concluding words of one of the divines quoted above :—

‘That religious communion will, in the long run, most commend itself to Englishmen, which displays the greatest efficiency in winning souls to Christ ; which proves, by a long, firm grasp of its spiritual conquests, the stability and force of its methods ; which makes men ‘men’ and not merely bigots or spiritual invalids ; which shows masterly boldness in grappling with that special characteristic of our time, an ever-widening and ever deepening knowledge of nature ; and which has vital power and elasticity enough to adapt itself to all sorts and conditions of men, and to the ever-varying necessities of our modern life.’

And to close in the gallant words of the Bishop of Manchester :—

‘We wish for no exclusive privileges which stand in the way of the fullest, freest enjoyment of their religious liberties by other men. We have no thought of reviving in the nineteenth century the spirit and aims of the seventeenth. The sword of persecution, let us trust, is for ever sheathed. At least, ours shall not be the hands to draw it. And though we hear on many sides, and in bitter, angry tones, the old Roman Censor’s ruthless cry, ‘*Delenda est Carthago*,’ we trust, if we only do our duty, that the doom of Carthage is still remote from the Church of England, and that, under God’s good providence, we shall transmit an institution pregnant with capacities for usefulness, not only unimpaired, but reinvigorated—strengthened, broadened, popularised—to generations yet unborn.’



THE BAPTISTS.

BY THE REV. BROOKE LAMBERT.

‘So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground ; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.’—ST. MARK iv. 26, 27.

JOHN WESLEY dreamt one night that he got to heaven’s gate, and was refused admittance when he presented the credentials of a denomination. Surprised, he asked what was the favoured creed, and running through the genera and species of differing sects, he asked, ‘Are they all this, or all that?’ ‘Nay, but they are all Christians.’ It is, I suppose, under the influence of some such thought as this, that the course of which my sermon is one has been projected. Not ours assuredly is it to glorify our Church as the only school through which men pass to the kingdom ; rather ours to trace out what part each section of the Church invisible sings in that great chorus of worship by which we are schooled. *Multæ terricolis linguæ, cœlestibus una*, earth’s many voices make one heavenly song.

To-day we have to consider what part the Baptists sing in the psalmody of eternity.

The Baptists are logically, if not lineally, one of the oldest of sects. The temptations to which professors of Christianity were exposed were in early days terrible. The earnest dreaded the awful sin of those who lapsed under persecution into heathenism. Better it seemed not to have known the truth, than having known it to turn away. They tried to protect men from danger. They advised them to defer baptism till they were unlikely to incur danger, either because their faith was so firmly established that they were strong in Christ, or till the prospect of death near at hand removed all chance of failure. The *καθαροί*, the Puritans of those days, unmindful of their Lord's word, tried to sever the wheat from the tares. Hence the first origin of adult baptism. Time ran on, and the world was nominally Christian. Earnest men shuddered to see those who professed a Christian faith living a life unworthy of the name. They would not call them Christians. They reserved that name for those who consciously accepted the faith, and lived up to their privileges. They and they only were worthy of the name of Christians. It was profaning the Sacra-

ment to administer it to babes, who could have no faith ; so they deferred the rite till the candidates were old enough to make personal profession. And if men had nominally received the rite, yet, since they could not really have entered into the meaning, when they came of age and made a true profession, they were to be rebaptised. Hence the two longer names, Anabaptists, applying to the rebaptised ; Antipædobaptists, opponents of infant baptism, which we shorten into Baptists. Baptism by immersion is strictly no peculiarity of the Baptist sect. The rubrics of our Church make baptism by immersion the rule. It prescribes baptism by immersion ' if they shall certify that the child may well endure it, but if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it.' The exception has by custom become the rule.

It is only as we see the principle on which their view of adult baptism rests that we grasp the meaning of their protest. Much of their action depends on the desire to separate the wheat from the tares. But this has been specially since the seventeenth century connected with that view, which finds its strongest expression in Calvinism—the view of God's grace as confined to a few, and those few consciously saved.

The Baptists are, I think, the only logical dissenters. We can conceive of other sects modifying their statements of doctrine and discipline, till they shall become in fact, if not in name, one Church. The Baptist differs as to his conception of a Church. The Romanists, the Quakers, the Independents, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, may be incorporated in the Church of the future, since many in the Church of England at present incline to one or other of these views. But whilst the world lasts there will ever be in the Church universal two bodies, the one which looks on man in his individual relation to God—the Baptist—the Calvinistic theory ; the other, which looks on each man as a member of a great society or corporation, and that society the body of Christ ; and this is the theory of our Church.

Now, what is the essence of the Calvinistic or Baptist theory ? It is the personal relation between man and God. It is a doctrine so important, that the spread of this sect on the other side of the Atlantic, where it is, with but one exception, the largest denomination, is no marvel. The aim of religion is to establish the personal contact between man and God. The Book of Job is a parable of the religious life ; Job is in

doubt, like many a good man. His friends try to convince him, and win him to faith. Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, Elihu the Zealot, all trying their special nostrum, are like the various Christian sects. They all say the same thing in different words. Job is unconvinced, and at last the Almighty is represented as coming on the scene. Read carefully through the utterances ascribed to Him, which are like the voice of man's own conscience witnessing to a truth underlying all that has been said, and you find absolutely no new statement. And yet the appearance of the Almighty has changed the whole attitude of Job. 'I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' This has changed the man. He has touched God. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. So is it with many who have known what is called conversion, who have been roused to a higher life. When the new impulse came there was no revelation of new truth: only the veil which hid the truth under a mass of incomprehensible words was lifted. They saw God, and the old words became instinct with life. The

creeds which, for aught they cared, might have had double the number of articles, became full of teaching. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith, not any more an historic faith built up on logical deduction, but personal acceptance of living verities which has changed the whole life. And so, in many who have never felt any special change, this revelation has in another form been made. The light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world is exercising an influence, gradually moulding them to better practice, insensibly leading them to higher things. And they, too, have seen God in the face of Christ Jesus: they have, if I may so say, fallen in love with goodness. They need no longer the old law, bristling with negatives, armed with penalties to keep them from evil. No longer is the word 'Thou shalt not do this,' enforced by the penalty 'That soul shall be cut off from the congregation,' needed. All that is gone by. We do not keep from sin because the law forbids it. The shame and disgrace of sin has been borne in on our souls. And we long to be set above its power, to be righteous as He is righteous: that, in whatever language we formulate our faith, is our highest aspiration; and our chief hope and comfort

in the future is that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, because we know that just so far as we do now keep the thought of God near us, we do not wilfully commit sin. What can be grander than a conception which produces these results ?

There is, I think, one grander conception, or at least one conception in which this truth, which is our life, shines out with more power, one way in which it may be more easily borne in upon the minds of all, and that is the conception of a Church, the living body, the contact with which leads man up to this higher personal contact with God. Let me try to put out this conception. Individual religion is a grand thing, but he who is religious in a thoughtful way meets with two difficulties : first, he sees many earnest men, many men more earnest than himself, arriving at a totally opposite view from precisely the same premises ; secondly, he is tortured from time to time with the fear lest the evil within him should get the better, and he himself become a castaway. How shall he meet these difficulties ? The idea of the living body called the Church meets both.

First, as to religious divergences. He learns in this idea that God is educating each man as a

part of a great body ; that, apart from the individual relation of man to God, there is another relation of each man to his fellows ; and that as in the body there are many members, and all members have not the same office, so also is Christ, and the body of Christ. Each sect performs a function, each creed lays hold of a truth which suits certain parts of the body. Look at the body physical. The mouth takes the food, and reduces it into a state in which the body can assimilate it, and all the organs of the body by different processes take up the assimilated food, and transform and incorporate it into bone, flesh, brain, and sinews. So also is Christ, and the body of Christ. It used to be an argument in proof that the world was not round, that the men at the antipodes must walk with their heads downwards. What could be clearer ? But the world is round, and men do not walk with their heads downwards. It used to be an argument against some view of truth, that it was opposed to the literal words of Scripture. We are now learning that words mean just what the constitution of the man's mind makes out of them. Early enough was Elijah taught that God had other servants than those whom the prophet acknowledged. ' I only am left,'

said he. 'Yet have I left me seven thousand,' said the Lord. And this is the truth we have to grasp, which we can grasp as we see how the different members form one body. To every earnest man, and every earnest sect, it has seemed as if the whole world lay in wickedness. And yet there stands the heavenly city—on the east four gates, on the south four gates, on the west four gates, on the north four gates—and through the gates they crowd in a multitude that no man can number. All these gates are not built to admit the handful of men which each sect calls the really earnest. God is leading many sons to glory by many different ways. Men are all on the circumference of a circle the centre of which is God, whom they approach from opposite directions. We can only grasp the full meaning of our Lord's rebuke to those who forbid one casting out devils in His name because he followed not with them—'Forbid him not'—when we see that there are diversities of operations, all guided by the same spirit, and that though there are many members, all members have not the same office. The hand cannot say to the eye, I have no need of you, because their work is different; nor the foot to the head, I have no need of you. In the parable

of the body the diversities of faith and practice are intelligible.

But secondly, how is each man to be sure that he will win through? Looking on himself as an individual, he can have little sense of security. As the member of a spiritual body he can attain to a measure of security. We belong to a great body with a great history, and marching on with that body we forget our individual weakness. We belong to the body which numbers among its saints the Abrahams, the Jacobs, and the Davids, the Peters, the Pauls, and the Johns—no perfect men, no heroes vulnerable only in the heel. We belong to a body which has a great destiny, and shall be one day reunited to the head which now breathes a purer atmosphere. Have you seen the Grotto del Cane near Naples? Down below is mephitic vapour, and the dog that runs at your heels is all but suffocated. You breathe an air which has no taint. Round your feet is wrapped the deadly mist, your head is breathing the air which made Virgil burst into immortal song. Till you part with all that makes life, with that which unites you to the head, you cannot be subjected to this evil influence. True, you may stumble and fall,

but the whole strength of the body will be exerted to recover you. Do you not see in all this the parable of the Church ? It is because of this that we baptise infants. They, like us, are under God's education ; they, like us, are members of the body. Incorporated into the Church, they are subjected to influences which no man can measure, but none ought to overlook. Who can tell why it is that each age has its type of face and tone of voice ? Who can tell why you can name the century in which a portrait was painted by the contour of the face ? Or why it is that the language of Chaucer presents rhymes which are no rhymes to us ? Insensibly our face, our speech, is moulded by the influences which surround us. The action of the whole body on each part, so that the history of the life is written on the lines of the hand or the shape of the ear, is an undoubted fact, though thought fails to explain the process.

And is this all sentiment ? So it does not seem in other things. It is something to belong to a nation with traditions and with a future. Why does the heart beat fast, and the eye swell, and the whole body tremble with emotion, as one tells how Englishmen fought at Agincourt, or won at Alma, or charged at Balaclava, or died at

Isandula? What it means who can tell? but it makes for much in history and life. This sentiment of a Christian body was a powerful factor in early Christian life. When Paul would win his Corinthian flock from two great sins, sins of want of charity and sins of impurity, he used two arguments very strange to men who have lost this notion of a body. He pointed to the destiny of that body in the future. 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' He verily thought that men who wrangled before the heathen courts about their miserable bits of property could be stirred to better things by reminding them that they belonged to a body whose destiny it was to judge angels. And he meets impurity with the question—'Shall I take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot?' A strange argument is this, unless we grasp the premises on which it is built up.

And so to point the moral by the parable from which I have taken my text, Christ points out the two lives a man has. There is one life which is due to the care of the man who puts the seed into the ground, watches it, tends it. That is like our individual life. But there is another life independent of his action. He sleeps and wakes, but the seed springs up, he knows not how. By unseen

forces, by power totally independent of his action, by the life it possesses as belonging to the organism of the plant, it springs and grows up. So is the kingdom of heaven. The Divine life in man is due to circumstances under his control. It is due also to circumstances outside his control. It lives a life dependent on the individual, it lives a life dependent on the organism. That individual life (this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God) finds its highest development not in the individual, but in the Church, not the Church of England, not that nor yet another. It is the Church spoken of in our own Canon iv. —‘the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world.’

The Baptists who put their immersion font in the place of the communion table of other churches, represent individuality. The communion, the supreme act of worship, is to others the barrier which keeps off the profane. They make the barrier at the initiatory rite of baptism. They appeal to no confession of faith, have no general convention, set apart their ministers by no act of ordination on the part of the Church as opposed to the congregation.¹ They cannot conceive of

¹ Wayland's *History of the Baptists*.

hereditary Christianity. The little children are not of their kingdom of heaven. It would be easy to argue against all this. It is better to ask what this protest in favour of individuality has added to the Church. That answer I have tried to give. And a system which has produced a John Bunyan, received the sanction of a Milton, given birth in our own days to a Spurgeon—who, whatever may be thought of him or about him, has certainly revolutionised the preaching of the age—to a Carey, the pioneer of modern foreign missions, to a Robert Hall, an Evans, and a Tipple, is one at which no earnest man can sneer.

The Church represents the corporate life. It admits all children to baptism, it admits all who offer themselves to confirmation, the Lord's table is free to all but notorious evildoers. It believes in an hereditary life. Earnest men groan at this laxity on the part of a Church whose principle is, as opposed to that of all other sects, inclusion, and not exclusion. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' It has produced a Hooker, a Wilson, a Robertson, a Kingsley, a Stanley—men who have spoken to the Church outside as well as to their own body.

Both these voices are needed in the grand

choir. The Baptists mayhap strike notes too high for the ordinary run of voices ; and yet there are goodly bands who can take the alto part. The Church suits best the ordinary compass of the human voice. It is content to sing the air, whilst other sects are engaged with their several parts. But as Baptists and other sectarians shall join with the Church in singing the new song in that Church above, would it not be well if all practised the choruses in the Church below ?



THE INDEPENDENTS.¹

BY THE REV. R. H. HADDEN.

'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.'—GALATIANS V. I.

THE Reformation of the sixteenth century took a shape here in England which was distinct and peculiar. With us it was essentially a compromise—a compromise between the spirit of antiquity and the spirit of renovation, between the old learning and the new, between the Church and the State, between ecclesiastics and politicians, between those whose eyes were still fixed longfully on the past and those whose hopes were pointed anxiously to the future, between Catholicism and Protestantism, between Rome and Geneva. But scarcely had this compromise come to be recognised, and hardly the Reformation obtained what seemed to be a sure resting-ground, when a large party began loudly to express its discontent. It

¹ The Hon. and Rev. W. H. Fremantle, Rector of St. Mary's, Bryanston Square, was prevented by a family bereavement from fulfilling his promise to preach this sermon of the series.

seemed to many that, after all, the work had been only half done, that greater freedom was wanted, that the Reformation must be reformed. There is in this no matter for wonder. Revolutions are rarely complete. Nearly always there is left behind a legacy of disappointment and unrealised hopes, a germ which, as time goes on, shall grow towards a fuller and freer life which was not possible before. Such was the process which brought about the rise of the Independents. There had been for some time a vague and unorganised dissatisfaction with the polity and customs of the Reformed Church, but it was reserved for a clergyman, named Robert Brown, to give to it definite and coherent expression. There is about Brown nothing of the saintliness and enthusiasm which lend such grace and charm to the lives of George Fox and John Wesley. He was a man of what is known as good family, and was nearly related to Lord Burghley, the great statesman of the Elizabethan age. Even when an undergraduate at Cambridge he showed unmistakable symptoms of the restless, imperious spirit which made his later life so unlovable. After travelling on the Continent, where he saw by contrast the incompleteness of the English Re-

formation, he returned to this country the inveterate opponent of the Established Church. Nothing could subdue him. He traversed the land from end to end, denouncing the existing ecclesiastical arrangements with the rashness of a fanatic and the passion of a child. He was imprisoned no less than thirty-two times, and, but for the influence of his illustrious kinsman, would probably have been deprived of the clerical preferment which with strange inconsistency he continued to hold till his death. His later days were miserable enough, and in extreme old age he died in the gaol of Northampton, to which he had been committed for striking the constable of his parish in a fit of rage. It was an odd satire which made this man the founder of the great and venerable sect of the Independents, who for a time were even known as 'Brownites' after his name. But the cause was greater far than the champion, and it soon found worthier exponents and a better fate.

Some of us at this distance of time can but feebly appreciate the intense dislike of the surplice of the sign of the cross in baptism, of the use of the ring in marriage, of the posture of kneeling at the Lord's Supper, which animated these 'separatists' from the Church of England. Nor,

perhaps, are we able to understand the earnest passion with which they clung to the idea of separate congregations as distinct from a National Church. To the religious observer of to-day, whose mind is full of the simple truths of Christianity, it is almost incredible that men should consent to be persecuted, and that others should be eager to persecute them, about points like these. Things are better with us now than that, but even at the beginning of the seventeenth century, with the great warnings of the Reformation still ringing in their ears, bishops and Presbyterians joined themselves together in an unholy and unnatural alliance to drive the Independents out of the land. Holland gave them shelter, and in Zeeland, in Amsterdam, in Leyden, they found the spiritual freedom which England would not and perhaps dared not grant. 'They knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on these things, but lifted up their eyes to heaven, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits.'

To the liberal and generous mind there must be something very sad about every compulsory religious exodus. It is impossible to repress the feeling that the victory is really a defeat, and that, though the cause has been won, it has been won

by the basest form of force. But in this case force was almost necessary. Religion was not then what it is now. The Church of England was just entering upon an era of grave and new responsibility ; the shackles of Rome had recently been cast off ; the protection of the State had been solemnly accepted. It was obvious that Church and State must for years to come share the prospect of standing or falling together, and that the enemy of the one would be the enemy of the other. In this must lie the justification of the policy of repression which exiled and deprived of life some of the earlier Puritans. In our own day, of course, such an excuse would be neither wanted nor taken ; in the reign of Elizabeth, amid the many domestic and foreign complications which distressed the land, the unprejudiced student will recognise its painful but emphatic force.

With the departure of the refugees the cause of the English Independents was temporarily at an end. The reign of James I. gave them neither encouragement nor hopes, and it was not until the conflict broke out between Charles I. and the Parliament that they again appeared on British soil. But in America they found, under the flag of their native land, a haven of grateful

rest. There are few stories of its kind more touching than that of the men of the 'Mayflower.' That they might worship God as they saw fit, that they might be free to obey the Divine voice which spoke to their souls, the pilgrim fathers braved the perils of the deep and faced the dangers of an unexplored continent.

The United States of to-day are the direct result of that Puritan migration, a migration, let us never forget, conceived and carried through in a deep and earnest religious spirit. But it is sorry work to hide the blots, and I will not slur over the tremendous errors of these Independent settlers. They had sacrificed much for liberty, but the freedom which they had purchased so dearly for themselves they refused to extend to others. No sooner was the colony established than they began a war of extermination upon the native Indians. There are in history few incidents so treacherous and so atrocious as the Puritan massacre of the Pequod tribe; it involved the disappearance of a nation from among the family of mankind. Among themselves, too, arose a want of forbearance which they were bound by their principles to deprecate. They proscribed the Prayer Book and imprisoned and banished

two men who were found to make use of it. They expelled from the colony one who held that worship should be entirely free, and that each might choose his own form. They 'whipped with twenty stripes' a female Quaker who had come from London to America to tell the secret of George Fox to the Independents of Massachusetts. They executed another woman and two men for the similar offence of belonging to the Society of Friends. Indeed, so bitter and so bigoted did they become, that their fellow-religionists at home sent across the Atlantic earnest and sorrowful messages of remonstrance. These are, of course, serious defacements, but in the two and a half centuries which have since gone by the descendants of those early Puritan settlers have splendidly redeemed the past by a precious and unchequered history of charitable dealing and tolerant laws.

Let us see what had meanwhile become of the Independents who had stayed behind. The reign of James I. and the earlier years of Charles I.'s rule saw in England a resolute attempt to go back from the work of the Reformation. In its wider aim it failed, but the English Prayer Book of to-day shows undoubted traces of that era of reaction. During this period the Independents.

were silenced, and it was not until the beginning of the Long Parliament, when many of them had returned from America, that they again began to attract attention. But there was rising now a more formidable enemy to them than the Church had ever been. It would take long to tell how, on the death of Charles I. and the establishment of the Commonwealth, the Episcopal Church had to go its way ; how the two rival bodies engaged in a fierce and merciless conflict in their respective efforts to take its place ; how, though Parliament repeatedly voted in favour of Presbyterianism, the people insisted upon their right to separate congregations ; how, in the end, the Independents carried the supremacy. Clearly understand the issue. The bishops had been expelled from their sees, and there was a revolt against every semblance of the system which they represented. The country wanted a new religious organisation, and the question was as to what form it should take. The Presbyterian plan was the plan of government by presbyteries and adhesion to a settled code of doctrine ; the Independent system was the system of distinct congregations, each determining its own articles of faith and its own arrangements of worship. Milton, who had in his day looked at things from

the Presbyterian standpoint, saw at last that 'new presbyter was but old priest writ large,' and the nation saw the same. It was a conflict between dogma and liberalism, between submission and freedom, and the country made its choice. Presbyterianism retreated to Scotland, where it still finds a congenial home; the Independents remained in England to sow the further seeds of that religious liberty which for so long it has been their pride and privilege to guard. Never was England greater, never was its moral tone higher, never were its clergy more devoted, never were the laity more religious, than in the time of the Commonwealth under the Independent system of church government. But it was not to last; it fell with the political conditions which had rendered its existence possible. The death of Cromwell was the death of Puritanism, and with the accession of Charles II. came the inevitable revulsion. Episcopacy was again established, and the outward features of religious life were completely changed. Puritanism had made its mistakes, and it was now to smart for them. Its fault had been that it had eliminated all joy and pleasure and brightness from human existence. It had forgotten that there is a poetical, a lively,

nay, a merry side to life. 'It was superstitious to keep Christmas or to deck the house with ivy or holly. It was superstitious to dance round the village maypole. It was flat Popery to eat a mince-pie.' The theatre was the snare of Satan. And so 'all that was best and noblest in Puritanism was whirled away with its pettiness and its tyranny in the current of a nation's hate.' This was not all. On St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, two thousand English rectors and vicars were expelled from their benefices, because, having accepted their offices during the Independent interregnum, they refused now to receive episcopal re-ordination and to conform to the new ecclesiastical conditions. It was a terrible punishment, but it was bravely borne. The records of those farewell sermons, some of them delivered almost within sound of this sanctuary in which we are worshipping to-night, have come down to us, and nothing can exceed the genuine sincerity of their tone. 'My beloved,' said the rector of All Hallows, Lombard Street, 'I come not here to throw firebrands. I condemn no man. I believe there be many do as conscientiously subscribe as deny to subscribe. I protest, in the fear of God, I cannot subscribe; perhaps it is because I have not that light that

others have. Brethren, I could do much for the love I bear you ; but I dare not sin. I know they will tell you this is pride and peevishness : the Lord be witness between them and us ! . . . I am very sensible what it is to be reduced to a morsel of bread. I would do anything to keep myself in the work of God but sin against my God. I dare not do it.' 'I censure none that differ from me,' said the rector of St. Martin, Ludgate, 'as though they displease God : but as to myself, I should violate the peace of my own conscience, which I cannot do, no, not to secure my ministry ; though that is, or ought to be, dearer to me than my very life ; and how dear it is God only knoweth.' Out they went, these two thousand honest men, from the Church which they had served so well and loved so much—out they went to seek the pitiless favour of an indifferent nation, to endure suffering, poverty, almost starvation. Mercy they got none ; penal enactments forbad even their worship. But the cause was not killed. After weary waiting and many vicissitudes it has triumphed at last, and to-day the principle of religious liberty is far beyond the reach of menace or attack.

The principle for which the Independents contended was certainly true and sound. They

asserted the Christian truth that God is free and that the soul is free, and that the soul's path to its God should be free too. It is a position which in our own time no wise Churchman would dream of contesting. The difference lies in the means of attaining the end. Can it best be gained by the system of separate congregations? The Independents say 'yes;' we Churchmen say 'no.' And so the appeal must lie to the spirit of the teaching of Jesus Christ. The Saviour said little about the individual soul: he said much about the Christian brotherhood. He said little about worship: he said much about practical love. He did not come to found a series of small associations which should represent particular and local truths: He came to establish one vast comprehensive society which should be like a net cast into the sea, gathering of every kind. The theory of Congregationalism is that each separate Church should consist only of those who have given proof of their acceptance with God: the theory of the Church of England is that every baptised infant is a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Ours, at any rate, is the wider way. Times have changed since the Independents seceded under the sacred

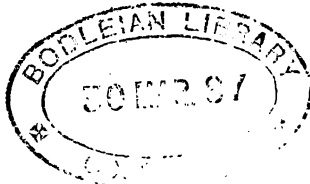
banner of Christian freedom. The lesson which they taught has been laid to heart, and at this moment there is no Church in Christendom where tests are fewer, where worship is more varied, where free speech is more tolerated, where ritual is more elastic, where liberty is more pronounced, than in the Established Church of England.

And where, as a matter of practice, Congregationalism by its very nature must fail, and a National Church by *its* very nature ought to succeed, is among those to whom, from habit or prejudice, public worship is unknown or even distasteful. The services of the sanctuary are not the whole, nay, they are not the half, of the outward expression of the Christian life. 'To comfort and help the weak-hearted, to raise up them that fall; to succour, help, and comfort all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation; to show pity upon all prisoners and captives; to defend and provide for the fatherless children and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed'—this is as much, again I say, this is more, the work of the Church of Jesus Christ than to furnish the accessories of preaching and worship for the comparatively few who are able or willing to appreciate them.

I am, of course, only comparing theories.

In practice there is no religious community which excels the Congregationalists in diffusing the Spirit of Christ over our social, our national, and our political life. But it is done in an individual and not in a corporate capacity: it is not the necessary and consequential outcome of the theoretical system from which it chances to flow.

Are Independents and Churchmen, forgetting a sad and discreditable past, ever likely to join hands? Who shall say? At present the signs of a reconciliation are not easily discernible, but who can forecast the future? Do you never, in the still and solemn hour of meditation, hear the nearing sounds of another Reformation? Some of us, especially those who are young and sanguine, often think that we do. These are days of movement and of progress, and dreams are rapidly realised. And surely those of us who are not wedded to particular forms and expressions may profitably strive towards the ideal of a Church national in fact as well as in name, a Church embracing in its fold every Englishman who works and prays and loves, a Church which shall harmonise order and liberty, a Church which shall express in its fullest and most unfettered form what, after all, is the beginning and the ending and the whole of all true religion—the mind which was in Christ Jesus.



THE PRESBYTERIANS.

BY THE REV. DR. ROSS.

‘Now the Lord is that Spirit ; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.’—2 CORINTHIANS iii. 17.

WHEN Sir Walter Scott was on his death-bed, he said to his son-in-law and future biographer : ‘ Be a good man, Lockhart, my dear ; there is nothing that will bring you comfort like that when you come to lie where I am now lying.’ And on reading or hearing this, almost the last of all the utterances of the great Scotchman, the question naturally arises : For what end does the Church exist save that of aiding men to be good ? An honest man, it has been said, is the noblest work of God ; and whilst not exactly dissenting from that assertion, I would hazard this other one, that the teaching institution, call it by what name you please, Episcopalian, Presbyterian or Congregationalist, which, judged by its leading principles, tends most directly to foster human goodness, which brings to bear upon the growth of our best

affections the sweetest atmosphere and the purest light, has a sanction and makes a demand upon the individual and collective conscience of man, which dwarf into entire insignificance all such appeals for support as are based upon merely dogmatic or external claims, whether these come to us in the guise of the Divine right of Presbytery, or in that of the supernatural virtues of Apostolical Succession. Our Divine Master has given us a very simple test by which to discriminate between rival pretensions to authority in the words—‘by their fruits ye shall know them;’ but it is He also who in this matter moved for us the ‘previous question,’ and warned us against expecting good fruit if the root be not good also. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs from thistles. But the figure can never square with the fact; else, as Coleridge long ago remarked, similitude would be sameness. And in speaking of Presbyterianism, as in speaking of any other system, one should always be careful to discriminate between the conscious dogmatism and the unconscious trust in a perfect righteousness which underlies it, and which if made explicit to the dogmatic believer, he might be ready to exclaim that it was a thing ‘which

he could not bear.' Conscious Calvinism is inevitably and intensely Pharisaic and damnatory. The unconscious trust beneath it laid down the outward life for the liberties of the world. Now, as my subject to-night is the consideration of the claims of Presbyterianism, we have these two questions addressed to us: What has Presbyterianism done in the past? that is, what have been its fruits? and the second is, what are its roots or fundamental principles? Let me, however, just say, in one word, that I will not enter at all here into the mere question of Church government—whether it is better on the whole that, as in the Presbyterian system, all beneficed clergymen should hold equally the same rank—should simply be presbyters or elder brethren—the laity as elder brethren also coming in for their full share of influence in the congregation, the presbytery, the synod, and the general assembly; or whether it is better that, as in the army and navy and elsewhere, there should be a subordination of ranks. That is a matter of altogether secondary moment. All orders which aim at securing fidelity and loyalty to a common supreme and elevating interest are holy orders, by whatever name they are designated; and, generally speaking, somehow, in most

Churches the best men, the best scholars, the best preachers, the best administrators do come to the front. Only now it is a Scotchman, Archibald Campbell Tait, who is head of the Episcopalian Establishment, and the other day it was another great Scotchman, Thomas Chalmers, who was the chief personality in the Northern Presbyterian Establishment—and both assuredly, thank God, good men whom Walter Scott would have honoured. It is not the mere polity or external organisation that is going to occupy us, but the far profounder subject, the truths which Presbyterianism and Anglicanism respectively proclaim as fundamental.

First of all, however, we have to speak of the fruits of Presbyterianism, and for these let us turn to Scotland. No doubt we have had Presbyterianism elsewhere. It was the established religion of England itself for a few years in the seventeenth century, but the genius of England refused to be tied and bound by the chains of the Solemn League and Covenant, signed though it was in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, in 1643, and by the grim decrees of the Westminster Confession of Faith. England preferred the sweet reasonableness, the profound and wide philosophy

of Richard Hooker in his great work, the 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' to the dogmatic fanaticism of Thomas Cartwright, the Presbyterian Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and, until a better order was restored, elected to abide by the liberty of conscience which was the watchword of Oliver Cromwell's policy, rather than by the relentless intolerance of the Presbyterians ; for, as Milton put it, 'new presbyter was but old priest writ large.' And again, Geneva was, as it is still, Presbyterian, and she has immortally linked with her name that of John Calvin. But of this remarkable Frenchman let these few words be spoken here. His theology is enshrined, as one day, no doubt, it will be entombed, in the Westminster Confession of Faith—the inexorable theology of the letter which killeth welded together by the logical faculty which is the great characteristic of the Frenchman. But, as a man, Calvin was intrinsically noble. Entering Geneva an exile and a stranger, he found it a kind of pandemonium of sensuality. He converted it into a city of saints, driving the unclean population from its precincts, as well as into a kind of Pharos of spiritual liberty for all distressed ecclesiastical mariners ; while his share in the death of Servetus

has been all but universally misrepresented. Calvin was not in possession of supreme power when Servetus was put to death. He had warned the unhappy speculator against coming to Geneva. He wrote to him that, lying as he did under the ban of the old Roman Church, from whose Inquisition prison at Vienne he had effected his escape, Geneva would not be more tolerant of heresy than Rome ; and when, in spite of Calvin's advice, he adventured into Geneva, he was seized and thrown into prison. Day by day, however, Calvin visited him, striving, but all in vain, to convince him of the exceeding great foolishness of his creed. Unretracting, he was condemned to die, and Calvin had no objection to the sentence. But, with the single exception of the Reformer Castalio, there was hardly a public teacher who did not believe that orthodoxy gave one absolute right to kill the body of the man who was bold enough to question its affirmations. For the doctrine of toleration was still waiting to be declared, notwithstanding that it stands written so grandly in the pages of the New Testament. It was first fully uttered in the early part of the seventeenth century by the great Dutchman Grotius. Cromwell fought for it with his sword and the whole

force of his sovereign intellect, and it was proclaimed in thunder tones by the voice of John Milton. Still Calvin had compassion, if no compunctions, and he implored the authorities not to burn the heretic, but in mercy to despatch him at once by the sword.¹ It should also be mentioned here that many who have adopted wholesale the Election creed of Calvin, have substituted for his high and liberal idea of the Christian Sunday a wholly Pharisaic conception of the Jewish Sabbath.

Turn we now to Scotland. For the last three hundred years Scotland has been nothing if not Presbyterian, and one may say she has been baptised in blood for her convictions. Her sons and daughters, peers and peasants alike, went psalm-singing to the gallows, the stake, and to death by flood for 'Christ's crown and covenant.' The memories of her martyred saints are to this day household talk in the glens and moors of all the south of Scotland. Devout shepherds uncover their heads as they pass the grey stone beneath which lie the remains, for instance, of such a youth as Andrew Hislop, of Eskdale Muir, who, when commanded

¹ Cf. Bungener's *Life of Calvin*. I am quite aware that even by modern Calvinists themselves a very different estimate is entertained of Calvin's conduct in relation to Servetus.

by an officer of those dragoons by whom the Covenanters in the time of Charles II. were hunted like partridges in the mountains, to pull his cap over his eyes before the soldiers discharged at him their deadly volley, replied : 'What should I do that for ? I have done naething to be ashamed o'.'

Presbyterianism, in the person of John Knox, thwarted the astute and deeply-cherished policy of Queen Mary for reimposing the Papal yoke on the neck of Scotland ; and this valiant and dauntless Reformer, who roused by his letters, which were writ as if in flame words, the lords of the Congregation, made Scotland a theocracy. If he had been able to carry out his masterly schemes, the Church lands, which had been appropriated by a rapacious nobility, would have been reconsecrated to the pious uses for which they were originally destined. He aimed at nothing less than combining a national intellectual culture with the spiritual edification of the whole population. But let us honour him for what he succeeded in at last effecting. He secured a stipend and a house not burdened with any dilapidations worries for every beneficed clergyman, and at the same time had a school with schoolmaster's residence, and salary chargeable on the land, established in every parish,

and, in consequence of his painful endeavouring and gallant life-battle, the population of his beloved native country, if poor, became God-fearing, intelligent, and provident.

In what other country in the world could such a picture be drawn from the life as has been painted for us by Robert Burns in his 'Cotter's Saturday Night'? And a beautiful confirmation of its truth has just been given to the world in that exquisite and most touching portraiture of his pious father, the stonemason, which Thomas Carlyle has left behind him.

Twice over the stubborn and fervid genius of Presbyterian Scotland flung off the shackles of the ecclesiastical bondage which James VI. and his ill-starred son Charles I. by kingcraft and priestcraft laid upon its shoulders; and when, after the Restoration in 1660, Episcopacy was again thrust upon the nation, the Scotch maintained an heroic struggle, of which the Boers remind us, for national liberty and the rights of conscience. They were hunted, as I have said before, like partridges in the mountains, and many a lonely glen witnessed a very Holy Communion indeed, when the white cloth was spread on the purple heather amid the gloom of the blackening storm. Pious peasants

were shot down at their own door in sight of their wives and children ; tortures of all kinds were employed against the insurgents ; men and women were hanged, or drowned, but still they fought their good fight, until at last the sight of the blue banner held aloft on the Scotch hills by worn and weary arms inspired the Prince of Orange to venture his descent upon England.¹ Hence came the expulsion of the Stuarts, and the famous Revolution settlement, with issues yet to be developed.

Let us cherish the memory of those who fought and fell in that struggle—for us and for our children they fought and fell—and at the same time give due honour to William Wordsworth, who, in a fine sonnet on those Scottish troubles, says that he

Who would force the soul tilts with a straw
Against a champion cased in adamant.

But, reverencing as I do the men who, in the words of Thomas Carlyle, cheerfully laid their bodies in the ditch that we might walk over them to Revolution settlements and triumphal songs—reverencing as I do the intelligence and the piety of the Scottish peasantry—reverencing as I do

¹ This circumstance was specially noted by Sir James Mackintosh.

the five hundred clergymen who in 1843 gave up houses and lands, yea all that they had, for what they believed to be the claims of history, conscience, and duty (and as Lord Jeffrey, the distinguished critic and judge, saw the procession passing from the church in which they had left their protest against the encroachments of the civil power, to hold their free assembly elsewhere, he shed tears of blended sorrow and thankfulness)—I do not forget, and will not shut my eyes to, the fact that there is another side of Presbyterianism. Rising up in righteous antagonism to the claim of infallibility, it claimed for itself nothing less than an infallibility equally authoritative, equally absolute, equally persecuting, for its own interpretations of certain passages of the New Testament. It would make the religion of Christ a religion of fretting rules, instead of its being, what it is, a revelation of eternal principles, in the carrying out of which good men may honestly and even widely differ. It was a great instrument in the hands of Providence for liberating the British Empire from the thralldom alike of priest and king; but, as Cromwell and Milton clearly saw, it would, if left to the freedom of its own will, have subjected us to a domination not less exacting, not less exorbitant,

than the tyranny of the Stuarts or of the Vatican itself. It would have exterminated Papists and Baptists, 'sectaries' of all kinds, Quakers, Socinians. It would, in papal fashion, have made the State its vassal, have erected an *imperium in imperio*, transformed the holy Christian Sunday with all its bright and glowing associations, into a day of ultra-pharisaic gloom. The Church would have been anchored over the Calvinistic shibboleth of the past ; no future could possibly be in store for her ; any light she had must be the light of other days ; and the individual, looking only back like Lot's wife, must have become a fossil, and at the same time a Pharisee—one who had no longer any need to pray for light or guidance amid the thousand complexities and perplexities of life, but only to thank God that he was not as other men.

If Robert Burns has given us the 'Cotter's Saturday Night,' he has also left for our meditation 'Holy Willie's Prayer' and the 'Holy Fair,' and in these you will see that when Presbyterianism is not asserting its democratic individual rights against official tyranny, or is not caught up into the devout emotionalism of a Samuel Rutherford, it is apt to engender pharisaism and antinomianism of

the most extravagant and also the most grotesque type. And you will not be surprised at these results when I read to you one or two articles of the Creed, or 'Confession of Faith,' which every Scotch clergyman and every elder is bound to subscribe in the most unqualified way before he can be admitted to his office.

'By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinate to everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death;' and again: 'The rest of mankind God was pleased, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by (like a supreme priest or Levite), and (like a supreme Nero) to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin to the praise of his glorious justice.' Further it is stated in the Larger Catechism that 'the punishments of sin in the world to come are most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in Hell fire for ever.' Now, just as in some of Fra Angelico's pictures the sweetest faces of angels and redeemed souls look out on the spectator with serene contentment while the most terrible shapes of demons and of doomed men are grouped beneath in obvious agony, or hate, or despair, in like manner the piety of the Scottish

Kirk has revealed itself as clothed with 'the garments of praise,' while accepting the dogma, so dark, so destructive of all genuine or spontaneous worship of the heart and soul, that from a vast multitude of human beings, innocent infants—for there are 'elect infants dying in infancy'—as well as men of riper years, but these latter not necessarily in moral character defaulters above others, mercy is withheld, and for no diviner reason than the 'exhibition of sovereign justice'!

But modern Scottish piety has risen up not in 'revolt' merely, but in 'revolution,' against the grim decrees of the 'Confession of Faith;' and I would here remind you that this terrible piece of artillery was not of Scottish manufacture, there having been only six Scottish representatives present in the Westminster 'Assembly of Divines,' with liberty to deliberate, but not to vote. It was specially English in its construction, while all the more advanced ministers in the North seem now to be of opinion that to discharge it in modern spiritual warfare would be fraught, as in the case of the old 'Mons Meg,' with more peril to the artillerymen themselves than to their foes.

During the last five hundred years Scotland has passed through two great epochs, and she is now

fulfilling the conditions of a third one. The first of these is that of William Wallace. He secured for Scotland the result which Samuel achieved in the case of the Hebrew tribes, and our own Alfred accomplished among the Anglo-Saxons. He fused the warring provinces into a common nationality. John Knox gives name to the second period, and, as we have seen, he made Scotland a theocracy. But Scotland is now undergoing the experiences of what may be designated as a lay dispensation. David Hume, Robert Burns, and Walter Scott inaugurated an altogether new era, and the land of the Kirk and the Covenant had the great task committed to her of subjecting her hitherto inexorable theological formulas to the dialectic of a new philosophy and the inspiration of a new poetry. 'Caledonia stern and wild,' it might be alleged, took very little either of colour or form from the sceptic or from the poets. She continued to 'keep her Sabbaths,' and duly trained her children to the Shorter Catechism with its curiously combined doctrines of 'Redemption' and 'the pains of hell for ever,' and her ministers painfully ascended the pulpit stairs charged with the stereotyped message, though the shafts of the light-hearted Edinburgh Reviewers were flying thickly round their heads.

But all the same, Hume and Burns and Scott had made an appeal to the inmost thought and heart of their country, and this appeal was first responded to, in terms which Scotchmen will not soon willingly let die, by two laymen, Thomas Erskine and Thomas Carlyle. The latter came among us proclaiming that God is in history as inexorable law, and the former, Thomas Erskine, that God is in the human soul as inexorable love. Carlyle in his later writings speaks more in the accents of the Hebrew prophet than of a Christian Evangelist ; but he was early careful to remind us, in his 'Signs of the Times,' that 'religion is no selfish mere mercenary wisdom, but a psalm rising up from the heart of his children to the Infinite Father—the source of all truth, of all beauty, of all goodness—and that to enable us to clasp the true religion to our hearts, the religion which enables us to love the world even when it despises us, a greater than Zeno was needed, and He too was sent.' To the universal 'no' of David Hume, Carlyle opposed a 'yes' equally universal, pressing upon the minds of his contemporaries the forgotten truth that nature is a perennial miracle, and that the whole sphere of human life is ineffably sacred, because in it we have always to do with the living God. And

it was Erskine who rediscovered the Gospel for Scotland,¹ to be followed in his revolutionary teaching by such truly apostolic men as John M^cLeod Campbell, Alexander Scott of Manchester, who was by far the profoundest thinker in the 'goodly fellowship' of insurgents against the 'Confession of Faith,' Bishop Ewing, and not a few still living persons.

Instead of a precarious 'offer of salvation,' Thomas Erskine proclaimed that the fatherhood of God and the kingdom of Christ are coextensive with all humanity, that the forgiveness of sin is the reigning law, and that the Gospel does not depend for its truth upon the changeful feelings of men, that it shines like the sun in the heavens, and that it is glad tidings of great joy to all the world.

In sermons, in biographies, in philosophic treatises, in bold criticism, and in the fine poems of Walter Smith, we see tokens of the sign of the Son of Man, and that a great day of the Lord is dawning over Scotland. And that Scottish philosophy, and Scottish poetry, and Scottish piety are now flowing together as one refreshing stream, we

¹ Professor Maurice acknowledged, in dedicating his 'Kings and Prophets' to Mr. Erskine, that he rediscovered the Gospel for England also, at least for himself, the greatest English theologian of his day.

owe mainly to these two men, Thomas Carlyle and Thomas Erskine. The loudest beating of drums cannot prevent the rising of the sun. Edward Irving with his doctrine of the humanity of Christ, John M^cLeod Campbell with his testimony on behalf of universal pardon, Alexander Scott with his profound philosophic insight, were cast out of the Presbyterian synagogue. But truth survives. The Gospel of liberty and of the love of God in Christ is penetrating by sundry crannies all the three sections alike into which the Kirk is divided; and there is good ground for cherishing the hope that all Scottish children, like our own children of the English Church, will ere long be taught in their earliest years to claim as their dearest heritage the Lord's Prayer, and learn to look on God not as a supreme and arbitrary ordainer of fixed conditions of weal or woe, but as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who willeth all men to be saved—nay more, who has 'made all,' and 'redeemed all mankind.'

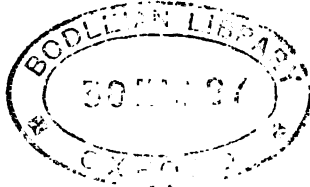
Men will then be 'good' indeed, as they will be free, when they understand that for all their lives their one great guiding star shines in the words: 'Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.'

The Christianity of Erskine, now heard in so many Scottish pulpits, would have gladdened the heart of Walter Scott, and it might have saved Robert Burns—‘the prodigal son of the Church,’ to use Dean Stanley’s pathetic yet prophetic characterisation—from some of the errors of his ways.

I look forward hopefully to the future of Scotland, but not of Scotland only ; and Robert Burns—to allude once more to the ‘peasant thunder-god,’ as the Germans call him—has prophesied of a day in the advent of which I believe with my whole heart, because Christ is in the nations the hope of glory—

It’s coming yet for a’ that,
That man to man the world o’er
Shall brothers be for a’ that.

Yet the fulfilment of this blessed expectation will not come about, as the saying is, ‘anyhow.’ Brotherhood implies fatherhood ; and in words that will, I trust, become household ones throughout our country, in order that we may be saved from the ‘fraternity’ which has become fratricide in other lands, the saintly M^cLeod Campbell has reminded us that to look up to heaven and see no Father there is to look round upon the earth and then find that we have lost our brother man.



THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

BY THE REV. S. A. BARNETT.

‘Behold, the kingdom of God is within you.’—ST. LUKE xvii. 21.

THE Quakers seem already to belong to a past age. The soberly and quaintly dressed women with their rich silks and scuttle-shaped bonnets, seem separated by centuries from their artistically or fantastically clad daughters. The sedate youths, with their deliberate speech, their habits of silence, and their faces refined by restraint, seem to have little in common with the eager, anxious, hurrying crowd which throng our streets. To step from Bishopsgate into the courtyard of Devonshire House is to enter an old world, a world whose inhabitants are ‘solid, inward and still.’

Yet it is only two hundred years since George Fox told the judge how his friends ‘feared and *quaked* at the word of the Lord,’ and so won for the sect he was forming the nickname of Quakers.

Their history is thus a short one.

According to the old allegory, Truth was sent

by God to men in the form of a beautiful and perfect figure. The figure was broken, and the contending sects each succeeded in getting a broken fragment. Each has a portion of the truth, but none possesses the truth. The Society of Friends, or the Quakers, has, as the other sects, its truth which has deeply marked English life. England's boast of her religious liberty, of her flag which never floats over a slave, of her wise interest in the prisoners and the poor, is more or less due to the influence of the Quakers. If now we see that theirs was not the whole truth, yet we may well stop to consider their teaching, that so we may give to their truth its proper place in that body, the Church, in which there are many members differing from one another in glory.

George Fox founded the sect, and the journal of his sermons and sufferings still contains the best expression of its principles. As he herded cattle in the fields of Leicestershire, his mind brooded on tales told by his mother of martyred kinsfolk ; as he came to the village he heard the disputes of those whose business and politics were religion ; in all the talk of his fellows he saw that the one concern was to understand God. George Fox and Oliver Cromwell were children of the times.

When they met as prisoner and Lord Protector, they recognised their brotherhood. 'If thou and I,' said Cromwell, 'were but an hour of the day together, we should be nearer one to the other.' Fox and Cromwell had both felt the power of the promises of religion. They had fed on the talk of men 'who claimed to gaze full on the intolerable brightness of God and to commune with Him face to face, who held themselves to be beings on whose slightest actions the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, destined as they were, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth had passed away.' Fox and Cromwell tried to make this talk a matter of actual experience. Fox heard the professions, but as an honest man, whose 'verily' was as another's oath, he did not himself realise them; and as a good man generally loved 'for innocence and honesty,' he was wounded by the conduct of two professors, who in the alehouse 'began to drink healths, calling for more drink, and agreeing that he that would not drink should pay all.' Vainly he went to priests who told him to take tobacco and sing psalms, vainly to ministers who quoted texts and preached up sin. At length, as

he kept himself to himself, living in hollow trees and 'desolate places,' it was opened to him that 'all believers had passed from death to life,' and 'that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to make men fit to be ministers of Christ.' Fox learned to look within and not without, to the spirit of God in his soul rather than to the spirit of God in the priest or the Bible. 'As I was walking by the steeple-house in the town of Mansfield, the Lord said to me, "That which people trample upon must be thy food,"' and the Lord opened to him that 'high professors trampled on the life of Christ within them while they fed one another with words.' 'Scripture,' he cried at another time, 'are the words of God, but not Christ the Word.' 'Christ is the light which lighteneth every man who cometh into the world; He is in every man, in savage Indian and high professors; they who look to Him may even in this life reach to Adam's perfection.' 'Light,' 'seed,' 'life,' were the words on which he hung his sermons, and his was a gospel of hope to many in England, America, and Holland, to whom preachers had spoken only of sin.

Fox, though, did something more than preach a doctrine. He was first a 'heavenly-minded man,'

but he was secondly a man of deep understanding and of a discerning spirit. He was, as we should say, a shrewd and quick-witted man. He soon realised that his teaching, unrestrained by discipline, would lead to extravagance. Men, in the name of the light within, would break rules of order and decency. Fox, therefore, as the light within himself showed him what to do and what not to do, made these guidings a rule to all his followers. In these matters he brought the highest principles to bear on the smallest duties.

It was the Lord who forbad him to put off his hat to any man, high or low, and he was required to 'thee' and 'thou' every man and woman without distinction, and not to bid people good morrow or good evening; neither might he bow or scrape with his leg to any one. Because their teacher is the Holy Ghost, his followers must not directly or indirectly support teachers who sell the Gospel. Because Christ the substance is come, they must not use church or sacraments. Because all days are Christ's, they must not call them by the name of heathen gods, but speak of first day and second day and so forth. When, therefore, Fox broke in upon a congregation or entered barefoot the streets of some city, it was not only that he cried, 'Thus saith

the Lord, "Take heed to the light within you, cherish the seed planted in your hearts,"' but also 'Thus saith the Lord, "Your churches are idol temples, your teachers are hirelings, your worship is superstition, your steeple-house is painted, the painted beast had a painted house."' When acts and words like these ended in his being taken before the judge, his refusal to take off his hat brought down on him the anger of the court, and his refusal to take the oath brought down on him committal to prison. Month after month in Devon and Yorkshire he spent in prison chambers which were open to the weather, so that rain came in, and 'when his clothes were wet he had no fire to dry them.'

His discipline, or, as we may say, the importance he attached to ritual, was the cause of his persecution. Neither the judges of Cromwell nor of Charles could pass by one 'who thundered at congregations till they fled as chaff,' who refused to take the customary oath of allegiance, and who by his conduct showed contempt of court. It was their outward peculiarities rather than their doctrine which left seven hundred Quakers in prison at the death of Cromwell, and made Charles II. a persecutor.

If, however, their forms brought upon them

persecutions, they also brought to them the support of cultivated and politic men like Fell and Penn. When Fell, who had expected that his wife had been led captive by a Ranter, found instead the quiet and restrained Fox with his grand manner and clean person, and heard him expound his rules of life, he was satisfied. The consequence was that even in Fox's time greater and greater care was paid to matters of discipline. Meetings were appointed which were soon constituted as monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings. To these meetings was given the power not only of caring for the poor and protecting the oppressed, not only of allowing and disallowing marriages, but also that of turning out members who fell from any of the rules established by Fox. It is remarkable that the last words of this unconquerable opponent of forms were 'The seed reigns over all disorderly spirits.' He rejoiced, that is, that the seed of Christ had shown fruit, but he rejoiced more that unruly spirits had submitted to the order which the seed seemed to him to enforce. Those thousands who passed from Gracechurch Street to Bunhill Fields following the body of their great teacher heard from the lips of Penn the doctrine of the inward light which will

overcome evil, but they were themselves henceforth members of a sect, separated from the world by forms and ceremonies, obedient to the government of their quarterly and yearly meetings, and recognised by the State.

The year 1700 marks the summit of their success. Then 1 in 130 of the population was a Quaker, in 1850 there was only 1 in 1100, and now the decrease is much greater. The story of the decline is a simple one. In the first place, their peculiar habits tended to make them rich. Their regard for details, their scrupulous punctuality and honesty, their methodical ways, their exclusion from the pursuit of politics and pleasure, fitted them to succeed in business. They became wealthy, and the day of outward prosperity is too often the day of abated zeal. For sixty years the Quakers slept. Here and there the letter of a Friend shows that the spirit of Fox still lived, but as an active power during these years the Society ceased. Its members were content to gather the rules around them which cut them off from the world; content to give negative testimony against tithes and war, to bear and make no protest; content to disown the members who broke some rule or dared to marry in the world, without making any effort to meet

their needs or restore their faith. The Quakers were simply one among many sects. When, therefore, the Wesleyan revival passed over England and touched of course the Quakers, it roused among them men to whom the one thing needful seemed the restoration of the Quaker discipline. Rules were more rigorously enforced, many were disowned, and Joseph John Gurney pleads that the operations of the Holy Ghost must be 'perceptible' before they are acknowledged. If the immediate result of such action was an improvement of morals, and a more active interest in questions like those of the slave trade and war, a further result was the secession of Hicks and his friends in America. These, returning to the doctrine of inward light, denied the teaching of the Bible and identified themselves with the Unitarians.

Under such influences the Society has now come to occupy but a small place in our national life. Many honest Friends think the Society has done its work, and that the doctrines of George Fox will now reach the world through the Peace, the Aborigines, and the Liberation Societies. They are content once more to be silent, to stand still and wait while the Holy Ghost revives forces other than their own to establish justice and peace.

To young England the existence of Quakers is now but a memory. Such memories it is good to have. It is good to think of those quiet homes not cumbered by finery or rubbish, beautiful by their soundness, healthful by their order. Father, mother, child in their silence commune together, and when one speaks the spirits of all enforce the words. There is a look in their faces to remind us of the saints of the Church and of the merchants of Venice—a look restrained by responsibility and inspired by thought. Of such men in such homes it is good to think.

If with greater experience we note their mistake—if we say that the effect of abolishing old forms was only to set up new with narrower limits—if we say that the same place is given to ritual by those who protest against it as by those who fight for it—if we say that forms were unwise which required disownment on account of marriage in the world, and forced a man to go to prison rather than take off his hat, change the fashion of his dress, or honour the heathen gods by talking of Sunday and Monday—if we condemn Quakerism as a mistake, we may still search out and reverence the truth it expresses. What is there we may take for our learning?

1. The Quakers owe some of their beauty and dignity to their obedience to rule. It is in homes where all things go by order, it is in business which is subject to fixed principles, and it is in those meetings where silence reigns and men humble themselves before her, it is by constant discipline that the Quakers gain the dignity which is man's birthright. To-day we sell the birthright. We surrender our dignity for a moment's pleasure. As followers of Him who for thirty years was subject to His parents, whose praise it is that He learned obedience, let us submit ourselves to rule. 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.' We must take Quaker teaching, we must conquer our wills and affections, and obey the rule of silence and order, that we may gain, as the Quakers, the dignity and the calm of noble manhood.

2. The Quakers brought to bear the grandest principles on the smallest details. It was because the Lord said it that Fox would not remove his hat. It was a matter of religion to be punctual, and it was not beneath the highest authority to forbid whispering and anonymous letter-writing. This is the pregnant principle to which we owe great reforms. It was this which put the Quakers at the

head of movements to free the slaves and relieve the prisoners, and it is to this same principle we must trust for future reform. Useless is it to hope that parliament laws will cure evils at home and do justice abroad. Each man must remember that for every idle word he is responsible. 'By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' It is a man's words, his most trifling acts, which make or mar the world. Right or wrong, God or devil presides over every act. It is no mere kindness, no mere private interest, which directs you to make an appointment, to give or refuse your hand, to write a letter, to choose a dress, to make a gift. The least thing we do is either right or wrong—enough, that is, to cause joy in the angels of heaven or in the demons of hell—enough, that is, to be fruitful in happiness to thousands or to be a source of misery to three and four generations. As Nature's greatest laws work in the raindrop, so the highest principles are involved in the smallest act. There are evils around us still uncured. God's earth in London is defiled by hovels and mansions which make it hideous, man's life is degraded by luxury, oppression, and neglect. The Quaker teaching that God regards the smallest act needs to be

heard again. The prospect of a better future lies in the hope that for God's sake, for his neighbour's sake, each man will one day consider his ways. It shall be so. One day we shall waste neither scrap of paper nor army of soldiers, we shall neither patronise the poor nor flatter the rich, because we shall think first of what is right, we shall hear before we act or speak, as Fox heard 'the voice of the Lord.'

3. The Quakers taught that there is a light in every man which will enable him here on earth to reach perfection. This doctrine has ever and anon broken through the dull records of the world's history. Moses protested against the ceremonies and priestcraft of Egypt, 'This people shall be a kingdom of priests.' The prophets declared in opposition to those who claimed to speak for God, 'The spirit of God shall be poured out on all flesh.' Socrates escaped from the jargon of the Sophists to commune with the deity within him. The doctrine which thus feebly struggled in the world was made manifest by Christ. He proclaimed that the Life, the Light, which the world saw in Him was in each man. That light, call it conscience, call it inspiration, by which men guide their ways, is Christ, whose life was love. Christ

is within each man, He in them and they in Him, waiting to be inquired of, waiting to guide them into all truth. It is the great Christian doctrine which the Quakers preached—a doctrine which our indolence and selfishness make it hard to learn. It is so much easier to go to Bible or minister than to the spirit within, so much easier to obey a rule than seek a principle. Who shall say that this age does not need the preaching of a Fox? We who, gazing at what seems useful, condemn our fellows to days of weary toil that they may make a cannon with which to destroy our neighbour, or build a warehouse which shall hide the sun's light, need the Quaker's gospel that we are a kingdom of priests, and that we may inquire of the God within. We who, weary with the mistakes and sin of men, turn to death for rest and to heaven for happiness, need to be told, as Fox told our fathers, that the kingdom of heaven is within us, and that here people may be made like unto God. We who suffer being alone and ignorant, whose prayers have grown cold and selfish, need to hear again the Quaker truth that God's Spirit maketh intercession with our spirit, that prayer is not the repetition of words, but the silent, continual, and unbroken repose of our will on God's will.

Let me conclude with words which when first heard, 'the power of the Lord seized on all in the room.'

'In that which convinced you, wait. And all my dear friends, dwell in the life, love, power, and wisdom of God, and the peace and wisdom of God fill all your hearts, that nothing may rule in you but the life which stands in the Lord God. The good will overcome the evil, the light darkness, life death, virtue vice, and righteousness unrighteousness. So be faithful.'



THE METHODISTS.¹

BY THE REV. R. H. HADDEN.

‘Mind not high things ; but condescend to men of low estate.’—
ROMANS xii. 16.

To realise accurately and adequately the meaning of the rise of Methodism, we must cast our thoughts back to the state of England in the early part of the eighteenth century. It was indeed deplorable. The most ordinary precepts of morality were disregarded by high and low. The government was corrupt, the legislature venal, the private lives of ministers of state often simply scandalous. The lower stratum of society was ignorant and brutal beyond all telling. Unjust and unequal laws encouraged and sanctioned among the masses of the people the coarsest and most revolting excesses and crimes. Churches

¹ I am indebted for some of the matter of this sermon to Mr. J. R. Green's *Short History*, to Dr. Stevens's *History of Methodism*, and to Canon Curteis's *Bampton Lectures*. It was, in fact, the last volume which suggested this course of sermons.

were few and schools fewer. Mob-law asserted itself at every opportunity. The recent introduction of gin had given a new impetus to drunkenness, and 'in the streets of London gin-shops invited every passer-by to get drunk for a penny, or dead drunk for twopence.'

The religious sentiment, if not quite dead, seemed to be fast dying. In the higher circles 'everyone laughs,' was the observation of Montesquieu, 'if one talks of religion.' 'Such are the dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world,' says an archbishop of the period, 'and the profligacy, intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. Christianity,' he goes on, 'is ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all.' The teachers of it, in truth, were its greatest hindrance. Many of the bishops rarely lived in their dioceses, and one of them admitted that he had visited his but once. The clergy, as a class, were profoundly ignorant. 'Our Ember-weeks,' mourns Bishop Burnet, 'are the burden and grief of my life.' Candidates for holy orders could not often give a tolerable account even of the Catechism; the

Bible to many of them was an unknown book. Among Nonconformists there was the same lament of a want of piety ; the atmosphere of the whole nation was saturated with religious indifference and spiritual decay.

It was amidst all this that Methodism burst upon the world. Methodism came from Oxford, the birthplace a century later of an equally wonderful revival. The central figure of Methodism was John Wesley, born in 1703, the son of a country parson, educated at the Charterhouse, a graduate of the university, and a Fellow of Lincoln College. Its origin was simple enough. Resolving to lead a life of closer communion with God, John, with his brother Charles and two others, agreed to spend a regular portion of their time in religious exercises. They met three nights in each week for the reading of the Greek Testament ; they spent Sunday evening in the study of divinity ; they received the Holy Communion weekly ; they kept a rigid fast on Wednesdays and Fridays ; they arranged their hours of work and of sleep on a settled plan ; they visited the poor of the city and the prisoners of the gaol. The story got noised abroad of these four or five young men—for Whitfield soon joined them—

who separated themselves from the folly and irreligion of their fellow-students. They were dubbed the 'Holy Club,' a name displaced later on by the more lasting and venerable title of Methodists. It was while John Wesley was temporarily absent from Oxford that there came over him a desire which has often influenced men of deeply spiritual natures. He craved peace and seclusion from the world ; 'it was the decided temper of his soul,' he said. Happily there was no lack of remonstrant voices. His mother's was one, and his bishop's another. 'A serious man' whom he consulted admonished him almost in tones of severity. 'Sir,' he said, 'you wish to serve God and go to heaven ; remember you cannot serve Him alone ; you must therefore *find* companions or *make* them. The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.' Wesley obeyed, and his obedience was a crisis in his life. He was saved from a cell, and henceforth the world was to be his parish.

Let us not lose sight of the primary idea of early Methodism. It was to recall an indifferent and sinful nation to a warmer love of religion, to a deeper enthusiasm for the Church and the Church's system, to a more prayerful and self-sacrificing life. The first aim of the movement was to do for

the Church of England what had often been done by the monastic orders for the Church of Rome, and what is now a recognised feature of clerical duty—to create, within the limits of the Church's laws, a guild, an order, a confraternity, an association, a society, the members of which, by their connection with it, might be enabled to live better, purer, more Christ-like lives.

The second phase of Methodism opens in 1735 with John Wesley's voyage to America, whither, with his brother Charles, he proceeded as a missionary to the aborigines, and with the view of instilling his principles into the settlers in Georgia. It was a noble mission, but it failed disastrously. On the voyage out, most of the passengers were Moravian emigrants whose spiritual leaders were as tenacious of their own particular doctrines as the Wesleys were of theirs. The churchmanship of the Oxford clergymen began to give before the simple piety of the German Christians. Soon after his arrival John had a conversation with one of their pastors. 'My brother,' said the Moravian, 'I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?' Wesley made no answer, and the

minister went on. 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' 'I know He is the Saviour of the world,' replied Wesley. 'True,' rejoined the Moravian, 'but do you know that He has saved *you*?' 'I hope He has died to save me.' 'Do you know yourself?' 'I do,' answered Wesley; 'but,' he writes afterwards, 'I fear they were mere words.'

Wesley returned to England after a period of unsuccessful effort which cost him many a pang. He confessed afterwards that he had gone to teach the Georgian Christians the nature of Christianity and to convert others, while, at the time, though he knew it not, he had never himself been converted to God. Charles was the first to find 'rest to his soul,' and three days afterwards John attained the perfect peace which he had not hitherto experienced. It was at about a quarter to nine, on the morning of Wednesday, May 24, 1738, that while listening, at a society in Aldersgate Street, to a layman who was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, 'I felt,' he writes, 'my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.' This was the new departure

in his life. This was the key-note of the rapidly approaching revival, which afterwards passed beyond Wesley's control, as to the issues of which he was often anxious, and upon some of the features of which he came to look back with sorrow and regret. From now dated the insistence upon the two doctrines which are still peculiarly identified with Methodism—that every man who would be a true Christian, be his temperament or his mental conformation what it may, *must* pass through a visible, momentary, sensible, definite change of heart, and that none can experience this process without certain assurance; and that, if a man knows it, he has attained unto perfection and cannot sin.

These were the motive forces of that marvellous revival of religion of which George Whitfield was the chief preacher, Charles Wesley the sweet singer, and John Wesley the director-general. Refused admission to the churches,¹ they sought other outlets for their zeal. They went where

¹ John Wesley, however, preached in many of the London churches, amongst others in our own parish church. 'Friday, Nov. 3, 1738,' he writes, 'I preached at St. Antholin's; Sunday, five in the morning, at St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate; in the afternoon at Islington; and in the evening, to such a congregation as I never saw before, at St. Clement's in the Strand.'

bishop and rector never went. In London slums and prisons, in Wales where immorality and heathenism had made upon the people an apparently indelible stamp, on the bleak moors of Northumberland, at the pit-mouths in the unlovely Black Country, 'in the long galleries where the Cornish tin-miner hears in the pauses of his labour the sobbing of the sea,' at the bowling-greens and market-crosses of remote hamlets and country towns, were raised in brave and unfaltering accents the voices of these Oxford enthusiasts. They had found the glad tidings, and at all costs they would proclaim them. Unmurmuringly they endured the grossest physical violence; they bore meekly episcopal frowns and clerical censures. Their work was justified by its results. Crowds of thousands and tens of thousands flocked to hear them, and nearly always with the one effect. 'Women fell down in convulsions; strong men were smitten suddenly to the earth; the preacher was interrupted by bursts of hysterical laughter and hysterical sobbing.' But the movement was too successful to pursue an unchequered career, and signs of disagreement between the Wesleys and Whitfield were soon apparent. It was a difference at which the simple Christian of to-day is almost inclined

to smile. These brave soldiers of the Cross were unable to reconcile their conflicting views on particular as against universal redemption; 'and the contention was so sharp between them that they parted asunder one from the other' never to toil together again.

The year 1744 marks the beginning of another phase of Methodism. The movement began to be regarded as charged with a political meaning. Wesley was openly accused of being in alliance with the Pretender, as actively favouring the cause of Spain, as working in the interests of the Papacy. It was necessary for him to make many things plain, and on Monday, June 25, 1744, the first Methodist Conference was held in London. There were present, besides the Wesleys, four clergymen of the Church of England and several lay-preachers. A plan for future action was settled, and 'disciplinary minutes' were passed. The relations of the societies to the National Church were discussed, but any idea of secession was discountenanced. The revival then began again in all its force, and extended to Ireland. There were the same fervid appeals and passionate responses, the same riotous opposition and marvellous escapes.

Among some of the Methodists there now

began to grow up towards the Church a feeling of impatience which the clergy of the Establishment undoubtedly helped to foster. But the Wesleys were High Churchmen still, and continued to insist that the Sacrament should be celebrated in the canonical way, and that the members of the societies should attend at the parish church to receive it. In 1758 John published 'Twelve Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England;' in 1764 he made unsuccessful overtures to the evangelical clergy with a view to closer co-operation in their common work; in 1778 he forbade the Irish Methodists to separate from their National Church. Still he could not but foresee what was inevitable when his own guiding hand should cease to direct the work. Every successive Conference illustrated the growth of a distinct ecclesiastical institution. Bit by bit the polity of Methodism was becoming formed, and in 1784 a Deed of Declaration was filed in Chancery conferring upon the Conference almost unlimited powers. In the Conference of 1786, however, after a discussion of the relation of the Methodists to the Church, 'we all,' records Wesley in his Journal, 'determined to remain therein without one dissenting voice.' His personal fidelity never wavered, and, as the end

got nearer, he became almost feverishly anxious about the future of his followers. Only nine months before his death he admonished his preachers : ' In God's name, stop there. Be Church of England men still.' And again, later : ' I never had any design of separating from the Church. I have no such design now. Nevertheless, in spite of all I can do, many will separate from it ; although I am apt to think not one half, perhaps not a third of them. These will be so bold and injudicious as to form a separate party. In flat opposition to these I declare that I live and die a member of the Church of England, and none who regard my opinion or advice will ever separate from it.' But it was too late. In 1791 the saintly patriarch

past

To where beyond these voices there is peace.

The organisation which had been the gradual creation of his splendid career was too vast and too elaborate to find place any longer within the Church. Four years later the last link of union was severed, and 'the people called Methodists' assumed a distinct corporate existence. While Wesley lived, he had been able by his extreme self-consciousness, by his power of command, by his almost papal assertion of authority, to

preserve an outward semblance of compromise and unity. After his death discord soon broke out. In 1797 the Methodist New Connexion was formed ; in 1810 the Primitive Methodists sprang up ; in 1815 the Bible Christians seceded ; in 1828 the Protestant Methodists assumed a separate shape ; in 1834 the Wesleyan Methodist Association came into existence ; in 1849 the Wesleyan Reform Association was organised. There have been, too, over a dozen smaller secessions either from the parent body or from one of its branches.

Many of these smaller Churches are truer to the genius of historic Methodism than the older society. 'Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate'—that is the standard of all true Methodism. The Wesleys and Whitfield were essentially missionaries to the masses ; their first aim was to overtake and help the work of the Church of England, as that branch of the Church of Christ which is established in this land. If John Wesley could come back, it is not too much to say that he would be indeed surprised. He would find 'the people called Methodists' associated together in what has recently been styled 'the Wesleyan Church.' He would find in America an episcopal government of his own followers side

by side with an episcopal government of that Anglican Church which he loved so well. He would find his preachers subjected to a rigid system of discipline and an inflexible code of doctrine to which the only parallel is that of Rome. He would find that the salient features of his own society are ceasing, or have ceased, to have meaning for multitudes of modern Methodists. He would find that congregationalism is quietly supplanting the class-meeting; that in many quarters little is heard of 'experience,' and not much of 'conversion;' that 'assurance' and 'perfection' are not features of every sermon. He would find that Gothic chapels, and ornate decoration, and elaborate services, have supplanted the primitive worship of his own day; that love-feasts and band-meetings and the early morning prayer meeting are not popular; that the itinerancy, once deemed the very pivot of Methodism, is fast becoming an open question. Above all, he would find that the educated young, forgetful of the traditions of their Methodist homes, and in spite of the efforts that are made to retain their allegiance, are leaving the faith of their fathers and seeking the fresher spiritual atmosphere of the National Church.

‘Mind not high things, but condescend to men

of low estate.' That was a call to the Church of England long before the days of the Wesleys. It had been nobly answered by the Franciscans and Dominicans in the thirteenth century, but since then it had sounded vainly in men's ears. Wesley obeyed it, and his obedience has changed the face of the world. It was obeyed again at the beginning of this century by the leaders of the Evangelical Revival, and of that too the signs are with us to this day. It was responded to once more by the Oxford movement of half a century ago, the working of which is at this moment the greatest fact of Christendom.

In all these movements the thoughtful man is sure to find something which he cannot harmonise with his own conception of Christianity. He may blame the asceticism of the religious orders ; he may reject the extravagance of the Methodists ; he may rebuke the narrowness of the Evangelicals ; he may sneer at the puerilities of the Ritualists. But if he be wise he will recognise that every great religious revolution which is designed to affect the great mass of the population must have something which shall serve as a central truth. We are not all hard-headed, and the soft hearts which some of us have can best, or perhaps can only, be

reached through our emotions. The cardinal doctrines of early Methodism are essentially emotional—the absolute necessity of sensible conversion, and the absolute certainty of thereby attaining to Christian maturity. Whether these are really the doctrines held by modern Methodists, I will not discuss ; that tenure of them is incompatible with membership of the Church of England, I am far from saying ; that the Church of England does not teach them, I am sure. But none the less may the Church make just and generous atonement for the past. If at last the Methodists crossed the threshold, it was because by the folly, by the bigotry, by the near-sightedness, by the cold-heartedness of our predecessors, they had for many a year been pushed towards it. That they will ever as a body re-enter, it is hard to think ; that they will never do so on the only terms which have yet been offered to them, is beyond all doubt. But though there be no prospect of renewed corporate life between the ancient Church of England and ‘the people called Methodists,’ there is possible always the wider, the better, the more lasting communion which comes from common love to a common Lord. It is that which is worth trying for and worth preserving. These

creeds and systems and ceremonies come and go, and come and go again. They serve their time and then make way for something else. There is nothing sacred about them ; they are all human ; it is always easy enough to replace them. And these names, too, for which we so earnestly contend, these sects and parties, to which we are so passionately pledged, shall one day be absorbed in a name to which we all lay claim, in a state to which we are rapidly moving forwards.

It is beautifully told of John Wesley that one night he dreamed a dream, and found himself in imagination at the gates of Hell. 'Have you any Churchmen here ?' he asked, and the answer was 'Yes, a great many.' 'Any Roman Catholics ?' 'Yes, a great many.' 'Any Presbyterians ?' 'Yes, a great many.' 'Any Baptists ?' 'Yes, a great many.' 'Any Methodists ?' 'Yes, a great many.' Disconcerted and distressed, especially at the last reply, he wended his way to the gates of Heaven. 'Have you any Churchmen here ?' 'No.' 'Any Roman Catholics ?' 'No.' 'Any Presbyterians ?' 'No.' 'Any Baptists ?' 'No.' 'Any Methodists ?' 'No.' 'Then whom,' in despair he asked, 'have you here ?' And the angel made answer, 'We know nothing here of

any of the names you mention. We are all Christians here, and of us there is a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues.'



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY,
DEAN OF WESTMINSTER.

'Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.'—PSALM li. 18.

THIS contains within itself the principle of the nationality of Churches. In the Old Testament, I need not say that there is nothing else. The Jerusalem which the Psalmist wished to build up, the Jerusalem over which our Saviour on this day¹ shed His passionate tears because it had not fulfilled its high purpose, was the Church of Israel. Its very name, Jerusalem, suggested its local, geographical, circumscribed origin. But as the New Testament advances and as Christian churches were formed it is still the same idea.

It is true that at that time the monotony and uniformity of the civilised world were such that nations, and therefore national churches, could not, properly speaking, exist. But cities and civic life existed, and it was in them that the first churches were formed. They were called not

¹ Palm Sunday.

after the names of their founders, nor yet after any special doctrines which took root there, but after the city in which they had sprung up. They were the churches not of Paul, or of Apollos, or of Cephas, but the churches of Jerusalem, of Corinth, of Ephesus, of Rome, as the case might be. They each represented to a great degree the peculiar character of the city in which they were placed. Individual Christians became members of the church of any one of these places, not by proselytism from one to the other, but by the natural bonds of residence, of local association, of affection, of ancestry. And when in after times this idea of a municipal or civic church was superseded by the grander idea of a national church, it was an expansion of the same principle ; it was the elevation of the Christian community to the higher level, to the larger fulness of life, which, through the Providence of God, was created in the formation of Christian nations. National churches therefore belong to the predestined advance, the perfect ideal, of the Redeemer's kingdom. To go back to small municipal churches, still more to go back to mere ecclesiastical churches, is to go back to the meagre elements of the old Roman Empire or of the old Jewish Synagogue before these new disciples had been

called into existence. To found churches on the mere likeness of opinion or custom is to found them on that false principle which St. Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians condemns as springing from or tending towards the carnal elements of faction or party spirit.

I propose to consider the chief peculiarities of the Church of England as a national church. Just as the peculiarity of the ancient Jewish Church was contained in the fact that it was the Church of Israel, or of the Church of Corinth that it was the Christian community of the people of Corinth, or of the Church of Philippi that it was the Church of the people of the Philippians, so the main peculiarity which distinguishes the National Church is that it is the Church of *England*. Whatever are the faults, the virtues, the opportunities of the English nation, these are to a great degree reflected in the English Church.

As the Apostle said to his converts 'Ye are our epistle,' so the clergy of the Church of England may in a large measure say to the English people, and the English people in like manner to us, 'Ye are our epistles.' Each is the expression of the mind of the other; each has its own characters written plain and broad; and those charac-

ters, whether they be graces or blemishes, can be traced visibly on the face of each—‘known and read of all men.’ Every Englishman has a right to the ministrations of the English Church; every inch of English soil is occupied by its parishes; every one of its pastors is the property as well as the guide of the English public. Other churches may have been founded for the maintenance of particular opinions or particular institutions. Other parts of the Christian community of this country have broken off for the sake of advancing particular truths, such as the maintenance of peace and plain speaking by the Society of Friends, or the maintenance of the Pope of Rome by the Roman Catholics, or the doctrine of separate congregations by the Independents, or the right of presbytery or predestination, by the Presbyterians, or the ancient practice of immersion by the Baptists, or the doctrine of assurance and the use of itinerant ministers by the Wesleyans, or the unity of God by the Unitarians. But the Church of England rests on no such special grounds. It was founded and it continues simply for the sake of doing good, after its measure, to the people of England. The Church of England is the inheritance of us all. However

much it may have failed to do this, still this is its object. Whatever estrangement may have grown up between it and the people, yet still there is a deep, an inextricable union.

Let me take three points in which this connection between the English Church and the English people is most visibly brought forward.

1. As the English State, so also the English Church is inseparably connected with the past. As there is a sense in which the State has preserved its continuity from the earliest times down to the present, through all the manifold changes which it has undergone, so also it is in the Church. The opinions, the usages, the forms of worship, both within the State and within the Church, have been altered over and over again ; but the framework, the general framework, still remains the same. The episcopate, the parishes, the colleges, the cathedrals, the schools of the English Church, all are founded on what existed long before ; and although the framework is nothing without the spirit, yet still the spirit receives a certain form and shape from the framework. It may be new wine that has been poured into old vessels, and oftentimes the old vessels have been strained to the uttermost to receive it ;

but if they can receive it, then there is a tincture and savour of the old receptacle which nothing else can equally furnish. The remark of a French philosopher has often been quoted, that ours is the only Church which touches the Eastern Church with one hand, and the Latin or Western Church with the other. It is equally true that ours is the only Church which touches the older Churches of Christendom with one hand and the new Protestant Churches of the Reformation with the other. It is the only Church which retains such large fragments of the ancient constitution of the Christian Church with so many doctrines of the new world. Other Churches may speak more powerfully to the fathers ; others may speak more powerfully to the children. There is none which has been gifted with such a power, properly used, of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the children to the fathers.

Just as all Englishmen, however divided in politics, still desire to preserve in the commonwealth the double element of order and freedom, of monarchy and of democracy, so all Englishmen, however divided in theological opinion, may wish to retain as far as possible the double element of antiquity and of reformation, of grandeur

and of simplicity, which we have inherited from our double origin. The Prayer-book of the Church of England, which is its most characteristic feature, contains, on the one hand, many of the best elements of the ancient liturgies, and, on the other hand, is one of the masterpieces of English literature. Every stage of English history has left a mark upon it. Henry VIII. gave us our Litany. Edward VI. gave us our Communion Service, where the prayers for the king have special reference to his youthful promise and tender years. Elizabeth is the sovereign mentioned in the Morning and Evening Services. The family of James I. are the princes and princesses for whom the Prayer for the Royal Family was first drawn up. The High Court of Parliament for which we pray was the Long Parliament of Charles I. and Cromwell. The Prayer for all Conditions of Men and the General Thanksgiving were given to us by the divines of contrary schools in the reign of Charles II. The American Prayer-book which sprang from ours is the offspring partly of William III., and partly of George III. The last revision has been effected in the present reign, and is still, if so be, going on to completion.

2. This brings me to another point. Many churches have existed which remain altogether unchanged from the past, but, for that very reason, are like dead skeletons of a former state of existence. This is not the condition of the English Church. What is it that has kept up its connection with the past? Here, again, it is the simple fact that it is the servant not of some small body, nor of some single individual, nor of any foreign potentate or society, but of the whole English nation. It has followed the fortunes of the English nation, not entirely, not always, but on the whole, and more completely than any other ecclesiastical institution amongst us. It is ancient, as I have said, because the whole English constitution is ancient, but it is Protestant because the English people is Protestant—because the Protestant spirit of the English nation has expressed itself in the forms of the English Church. The sovereign and law of England is its only earthly head. Neither its primate nor its clergy can of themselves change its laws, or prevent the change of its laws, in opposition to the declared will of the nation as expressed in the supreme acts of the legislature or the supreme courts of the law. It is thus brought into direct connection and contact

with the lay mind of England. It is thus drawn upwards from the prejudice or fancy of any particular profession into the general atmosphere which belongs to all alike. And as from this connection flow its peculiar advantages, so also from this connection flow its peculiar duties. The education of the poor, the relief of the suffering, the elevation of art, the purification of manners, the advance of knowledge—all these are the duties thrown upon the Church by the nation. As in the eye of the law there is no Englishman born and baptised in our country for whom the English Church is not in some degree responsible, so there is no English interest which does not more or less concern it. It cannot avoid them without forfeiting the very object of its existence. As the nation moves it must move also. If it lags behind it is lost. If it pushes forward it has at least a better chance than any other institution of drawing the nation after it.

And this same dependence on the law and the government of England, rather than on any special government of any particular class, has, on the whole, secured for it that variety of gifts which has made it conspicuous amongst the Churches of Europe. This variety of gifts in our Church,—of

which that variety of which I have spoken is only one example—this variety no doubt has its difficulties, but these are difficulties which belong to the very essence of the mixed character of the English people and English constitution. We bear with it—we rejoice in it—we glory in it, as we see it in the nation. We should rejoice in it—we should bear with it—we should glory in it no less, when we see it in the Church. ‘Hast thou but one blessing, O my father,’ we may well say alike to the Father of the State and of the Church. Yes, thou hast a blessing for all of us. The monarchy is not the property of one section of the community. The parliament is, of necessity, composed of both the contending factions in the commonwealth. The glory of our literature, of our law, and of our army, is the common inheritance of all of us. And so also are, or ought to be, the Prayer-book and the English Bible, the humble parish church and the proud cathedral.

We do not all take equal pleasure or find equal instruction in every part of our worship or our theology. To some, morning and evening prayer, to some the litany, to some the catechism, to some the creeds, to some one, to some another of the creeds, conveys its own peculiar lesson. There is

thus a conscience clause, a safety-valve left for special scruples. For all, in the past history of the English Church, there are names of peculiar attraction : for some, Latimer, Bradford, Cowper, John Newton, Cecil ; for some Laud, Ken, Dodwell, Sancroft ; for some Hooker, Jeremy Taylor, Tillotson, Chillingworth, Paley. This freedom, this variety, which is the sign of life and thought, we owe, under God, to the supremacy of the law, to the control of the nation, which secures to the laity their power of guiding, modifying, stimulating, the Church, as they did in the primitive ages—which secures to the clergy that protection against their own besetting faults, and against the tyranny of a class or a majority, which they could in no other way secure so effectually. No doubt, at particular times the National Church of England has become exclusive and narrow and persecuting ; but this almost from the very beginning has been against its fundamental principles, against the doctrine of freedom and comprehensiveness which both its friends and its enemies describe as its chief characteristic. Once lost, this common field of Christian action could hardly be replaced. Once gained, let it be our glory and our ambition to use it to the very utmost.

3. There is yet one other aspect of the Church of England, arising from its connection with the English nation. One of the names of its chief pastor is the Primate and Patriarch of all the Queen's Churches. We know not what was the exact force of this title when first given three hundred years ago, but it certainly well expresses his relation and the relation of the Church of England to all those other Churches within the dominion of England which, though not, strictly speaking, parts of the National Church, are yet in a certain sense the Church of the realm and of the sovereign, tolerated, recognised, and to a certain degree governed, by her laws. There are those Nonconforming communities which, from time to time, have broken off in this or that direction from the ancient Established Church, but which still remain more or less in connection with it—which in part, no doubt, derive their lineage from foreign Reformers, but also in part from ourselves, and certainly from their own native English character. The chief founders of the Nonconformist Churches, Robert Brown, Richard Baxter, and John Wesley, the founders of the Independents, the Presbyterians, and the Methodists, were all ordained ministers of the English Church, and received their

first spiritual life within its pale. The Baptists and Quakers, though not Anglican, are yet peculiarly English. And so, when we go farther yet, the Churches of the Colonies and the Churches of the United States of America, in their different shades and colours, all have a native English growth, some more and some less. They all look back to the Church of England as their common hearth and home. However independent of the Church of England those other communities may have become, yet they all feel and would acknowledge that their whole position would be altered if the mother Church, round which they revolve, were to be shattered to pieces—if there were henceforward to be no one centre of English religious life, out of which the others may go forth, and to which they may, at least from time to time, return. This is the position which, to some extent at least, the Church of England has occupied—which, perhaps, to a larger and larger extent it might occupy hereafter. This it is which gives to its ministrations, to its pastors, to its liturgy, something of a national character even in the eyes of those who are most widely estranged from it. The life and energy of these, its non-conforming children, come back into its bosom :

its toleration and world-wide grasp go out more or less to them. They fill up spaces in the English religious life which the Church of England itself can hardly reach, as the Church of England, on the other hand, keeps up a standard which they themselves gladly recognise. There is surely no Churchman so exclusive as not to claim for his own use the hymns of Isaac Watts or of Charles Wesley, the parable of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and the poem of 'Paradise Lost.' There is no Nonconformist, surely, so exclusive as not to find pleasure in the hymns of the 'Christian Year' and of Bishop Ken, in the magnificent prose of Hooker or Jeremy Taylor, in the touching prayers of the liturgy, or in the all-embracing charm of the Authorised Version. Abbey and cathedral, parish church and country churchyard, are surely, in many senses, theirs as well as ours. As amongst the different Churches of Christendom there is still a common element which has come down from the earliest times of the Gospel, so among the different Churches of the Anglo-Saxon race there is a common element which belongs to all of them ; and of that common element the hearth and cradle is the Church of England.

I have thus very briefly gone through the

main peculiarities of the constitution of the English Church. I have not dwelt upon details, nor have I dwelt on those characteristics of a church which, as I said at the beginning, are common to all churches—the part which every church takes, or ought to take, in the enlightenment, the amelioration, the elevation, the sanctification, of those committed to its charge. All churches do this, or attempt to do this, more or less, and only so far as they do it are they worthy of their name and place. But what I have wished to point out is the means, the peculiar and precious opportunities, which the English Church has for this great work, over and above the energy of man and the grace of God which all churches alike claim and possess. There are many points, doubtless, in which the Church of England may have fallen short of its great opportunities ; there are some points in which those opportunities themselves fall short of other churches. The Church of England, is inferior in venerable antiquity to the Greek, in imperial power to the Roman, in enlightening research to the German, in independence of spirit to the Swiss Protestant or the Scottish. But, nevertheless, it has its own pre-eminent vantage-grounds in the three points which I named

—first, its capacity for binding together the old and the new ; secondly, its capacity for uniting the clergy and the laity and the different religious tendencies of the nation under the control not of any lesser body, but of the English state and commonwealth itself ; thirdly, its central relation to all the divers branches of the English-speaking churches throughout the world. It is for us to see that these great opportunities are used—that these towers and bulwarks are manned and occupied by hearts and minds, by a spirit and purpose, worthy of their greatness. It is one result of those very peculiarities which I named that, in the work of strengthening, reforming, and improving the Church of England, every one of us may, in his measure, take a part ; for the Church of England, by its very name, is the Church of us all. We all—not only those who teach, nor those only who communicate, nor those only who are converted to this opinion or to that feeling, but we all—are the Church of England, bone of its bone, and flesh of its flesh. By our weakness it grows weak ; by our indulgence in foolish fancies it becomes fanciful and childish ; by our strength it grows strong ; by our knowledge, of whatever kind, it becomes enlightened ; by our zeal

it becomes energetic; by our sound common sense it becomes useful. This is the true meaning of our being in communion with the Church of England. We bind ourselves in that communion to do the best we can for our country and for the present and future of our National Church. Let us each, according to his power, help to clear out every old abuse, every stumbling-block of needless offence, every ignorant prejudice, every form which has lost its meaning, every obstacle to the full efficacy of our services, our ministrations, our teaching, our prayers. The Church of England is old, but it is still fresh and sound. It is decayed in parts, but it may still be amended and strengthened. It is vacant in parts, but it may still be peopled. Some of its joints are stiff, but they may be relaxed. Its mental and spiritual resources have often been wasted, but they are not yet exhausted. It has harboured much that belongs to the mere dirt and rubbish of the passing fancies of men, but it has also been the home of much that has enlightened and consoled and cheered the hearts and minds of English men and English women for centuries. It has still a mighty work to do, if we who have the charge of

it have the courage and the wisdom and the patience to do it. 'Forsake us not, O God, in our old age, when we are grey-headed, until we have showed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to all them that are yet for to come!'

APPENDIX.

THERE is here gathered from various sources¹ some information which may help to illustrate the preceding pages. The points which it seems necessary briefly to bring out are (i.) the divisions, (ii.) the constitution and polity, and (iii.) the standards or confessions of faith of the chief Dissenting Churches.

I.

According to the return of the Registrar-General, there are at the present time in England and Wales 172 religious denominations, possessing amongst them 20,749 places of worship. A close and critical examination of this list would require an intimacy with the religious life of the country such as very few people possess, but even a rough analysis affords matter for thought. It shows that if in the past the Church of England has been unable to find room within its pale for every variety of opinion, the same is true of each of the prominent Non-conformist bodies. It shows, too, that if men have chafed at the discipline of the Established Church they have been equally impatient of the yoke of churches untrammelled by State control.

1. The Baptists are a very divided church, and their

¹ See Blunt's *Dictionary of Sects and Heresies*; the various year-books and official records; the carefully compiled notes in *Whitaker's Almanac*; Dr. Schaff's *Creeeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches*; and Canon Curteis's *Bampton Lectures*.

history has been one of frequent disruption. In 1633 they split up into two main divisions—the Particular Baptists, who adhered to the teaching of Calvin ; and the General Baptists, who asserted the Arminian view of the Redemption. From the latter body the New Connection General Baptists seceded in 1760, and about 200 congregations still exist. The General Baptists are now, generally speaking, Unitarian in their creed, and only about 100 congregations of them remain. The Particular Baptists are the parent stock, and by far the most influential section of the communion. Their churches constitute the Baptist Union ; but they again are divided into two great classes—the Free Communions, who admit to the Lord's Supper all who have ever been baptized ; and the Close Communions, who admit those only who have been baptized as adults. It is said that there are no less than 550 Baptist congregations unattached, who own no connection with anybody beyond the walls of their own place of meeting. At any rate the divisions are still very minute, as is shown by the following list of denominations registered in England and Wales :—

- Calvinistic Baptists.
- Congregational Baptists.
- General Baptists.
- General Baptist New Connection.
- New Connection General Baptists.
- Old Baptists.
- Open Baptists.
- Particular Baptists.
- Presbyterian Baptists.
- Scotch Baptists.
- Seventh Day Baptists.
- Strict Baptists.
- Unitarian Baptists.
- Union Baptists.

2. The Independent body, as its name implies, permits the widest divergence of creed among the churches which compose it, and the absence of anything more than local standards of doctrine and discipline has thus prevented formal secessions. At the present time there are very few churches which do not belong to the Congregational Union; but the Independent Unionists, the Testimony Congregational Church, and the Union Congregationalists are registered as distinct religious organisations, and there are other direct or indirect offshoots of some Independent Church.

3. Presbyterianism, of course, is not English; but in Scotland, its home, it has long been a house divided against itself. Besides the three main bodies—the Established Church, the Free Church, and the United Presbyterian Church—there are several small divisions, and the Free Church has quite recently had a narrow escape of a secession which must have shaken it to the very foundations. In England and Wales Presbyterianism is represented by the following denominations:—

- The Church of Scotland.
- The Presbyterian Church of England.
- The Presbyterian Church in England.
- The Reformed Presbyterians.
- The United Presbyterians.
- The Welsh Free Presbyterians.
- The Calvinistic and Welsh Calvinists.

4. Even the Society of Friends has not had a career of unbroken peace. In 1695 the expulsion of George Keith for holding erroneous views on the human nature of our Lord led to the formation of a short-lived sect known as Keithians. A schism led by Hannah Barnard took place in Ireland at the end of the last century, and involved the whole Society in the dispute.

About 1820 occurred the outbreak of 'New Lights' or Ranters in New England. This was soon followed by the 'Hicksian' or Unitarian schism in Philadelphia. The followers of Elias Hicks are now the most numerous section of the American Quakers, and are practically Unitarian in their belief. They are not recognised by the English Friends. The Hicksian schism was followed by the 'Beacon' schism, the promoters of which, in their horror at the views of Hicks, went to the other extreme. The years 1835-40 saw the rise of 'Gurneyism,' which turned upon the truth of the teachings of an English Quaker, Joseph John Gurney. He was charged with unduly exalting the authority of the Scriptures, and the dispute caused great distress among the Friends both here and in the United States.

5. The history of Methodism since the death of John Wesley is marked by an astonishing series of internal disagreements and consequent secessions. The earliest dispute took place in 1797, and resulted from the unsuccessful efforts made under the leadership of Alexander Kilham to obtain for the congregation greater control over the services and ministers. The reformers banded themselves together as the Methodist New Connexion.

In 1810, a controversy arose on the subject of camp-meetings, a form of religious revival common in America, which Hugh Bourne, a layman, encouraged in this country. Bourne was expelled by the Burslem Quarterly Meeting, and his sympathisers formed themselves into the Primitive Methodists. The Bible Christians sprang up five years later under William Bryan, a Cornish local preacher; the Protestant Methodists seceded in 1828; the Wesleyan Methodist Association was the result of a quarrel between Dr. Samuel Warren and the Conference

in 1835; and the Wesleyan Methodist Reformers broke off in 1849 to mark their dissent from the treatment of Jabez Bunting by the Conference. The two latter bodies joined together in 1857 as the United Methodist Free Churches, but a minority refused to amalgamate and now constitute the Wesleyan Reform Union. The subjoined list will give some idea of the varieties of Methodist teaching and practice in this country alone :—

Benevolent Methodists.
Bible Christians.
Free Methodists.
Independent Methodists.
Methodist Reform Union.
Modern Methodists.
New Connexion Methodists.
New Methodists.
Primitive Methodists.
Refuge Methodists.
Reformed Free Church Wesleyan Methodists.
Temperance Methodists.
United Methodist Free Church.
Welsh Calvinistic Methodists.
Welsh Wesleyan Methodists.
Wesleyans.
Wesleyan Methodist Association.
Wesleyan Reformers.
Wesleyan Reform Glory Band.

There are very many sects in the Registrar-General's list which are offshoots of one or more of the larger Nonconformist churches rather than of the Established Church; but the following names would seem to indicate that within the last few years there have been people whose religious resting-place is somewhere between the Church of England and the more pronounced forms of Dissent :—

The Anglican Church.
The Episcopalian Dissenters.
The Episcopal Free Church.
The Free Church of England.
The Order of St. Austin.
The Reformed Church of England.
The Reformed Episcopal Church.

II.

Each local congregation of the Baptist and Independent bodies has a separate autonomy ; whereas among the Presbyterians, Quakers, and Methodists, there are, as it were, a tribunal of first instance, a superior court, and a court of final appeal, forming an ascending gradation of authority. It has already been mentioned that among the Baptists there are many unattached congregations acknowledging no sort of visible communion with any other religious organisation. In one sense the same is true of the Independents, though the Congregational Union is a very comprehensive federation on very liberal lines. But with both the Baptists and Independents each individual church is complete in itself, and all external associations are quite gratuitous. Each local church chooses its own minister, regulates the admission of members, manages its own business, disposes of its own disputes ; a pure democracy is the very essence of its existence.

1. The Baptist Union is an alliance of the representatives of Baptist congregations. It recognises that every Baptist church in connection with the Baptist Union has liberty to interpret and administer the laws of Christ, and it insists that the immersion of believers is the only Christian baptism. The Assembly meets twice a year—

in the spring in London, and in the autumn in the country—and consists of three classes of delegates—*representative*, comprising ministers of churches, the heads and tutors of theological colleges, and delegates from churches, associations, and societies; *personal*, consisting of members of churches who, being Baptists, shall have been duly accredited in writing by at least three members of the Assembly and accepted by the Committee; and *honorary*, being persons admitted by resolution of the Assembly on the special nomination of the Committee. The meetings of the Assembly are deliberative, and are only administrative in so far as the management of essentially Union affairs is concerned: the Assembly has no sort of jurisdiction over the congregations whose delegates compose it. Its general aims are to promote love for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, to afford to its members opportunities for conference and expression of opinion, to assist joint action in questions affecting the welfare and extension of the denomination, to co-operate with other Christian communities, and to maintain the right of all men everywhere to freedom from disadvantage, restraint, and taxation in matters purely religious.

In addition to the Baptist Union, which was founded in 1864, there are 33 local associations in England, and 9 in Wales. These are constituted mainly on a geographical basis, the Norfolk Association dating from 1663; but the General Baptist Association, which has existed since 1770, includes congregations in all parts of the country. The local associations are simply deliberative bodies meeting from time to time for the discussion of religious and social questions.

2. The Congregational Union, too, recognises the right of every individual church to administer its affairs free from external control, and in no case assumes for itself

legislative authority or consents to become a court of appeal. Its constitution is similar to that of the Baptist Union, and consists of three classes of members. These are *representative*, *honorary*, and *associates*. *Representative* members include delegates from any Congregational church, or any college or society of the denomination; the pastor *ex officio* of every church which contributes to the Union's funds; and delegates from any 'Union' church—that is, one in which neither church membership nor tenure of office is dependent on opinions held regarding the subjects or work of baptism. *Honorary* members must be retired pastors who are voted for openly, and *associates* are missionaries residing temporarily in England, or members of any church competent to subscribe to the Union's funds but which does not do so. *Associates* may attend and vote at the assemblies, but not at the business meetings, of the Union. The Union meets in May in London, and in autumn in the country. Its general objects are stated to be to uphold and extend evangelical religion primarily in connection with the Congregational order, to promote scriptural views of Christian fellowship, to further the fraternal relation of Congregational churches and the correspondence of Christian churches all over the world, to assist in promoting perfect religious equality for all British subjects, and to advance reforms bearing on their moral and social well-being.

The local Unions in England and Wales number 51, and their functions resemble those of the Congregational Union.

3. The unit of government in every Presbyterian denomination is the Presbytery. In two of the three Churches of Scotland—the Established Church and the Free Church—representatives from the Presbyteries con-

stitute a Synod, but in the United Presbyterian Church and in the Presbyterian Church of England there is no intermediate body. In each case the General Assembly is the supreme court, that of the Church of Scotland being presided over by a Lord High Commissioner who is appointed by the Crown. In the Established Church of Scotland are 16 Synods and 84 Presbyteries, in the Free Church 14 Synods and 78 Presbyteries, in the United Presbyterian Church 36 Presbyteries, and in the Presbyterian Church of England 10 Presbyteries. In every instance the General Assembly has complete and final authority over every congregation within its jurisdiction.

4. The polity of the Society of Friends is much more elaborate than is usually supposed. The unit is the Monthly Meeting, which may, however, include a subdivision of Preparative Meetings. The Monthly Meeting often comprises several meetings, and all members are free to attend. Membership of a meeting is granted by the general body of members, who accept the candidate on the recommendation of a few Friends who have been appointed to visit and question him. The Quarterly Meeting includes the various Monthly Meetings, who send representatives to attend it, and has the care of subordinate meetings. It may sanction or veto any suggested alteration, and reports its action to the Yearly Meeting, held annually in London. The Yearly Meeting consists of all the members of the Quarterly Meetings in Great Britain and of representatives from the Yearly Meeting in Ireland; any member of the Society of Friends may take part in the proceedings. The Quakers have no ministers in the ordinary sense of the word; but lay members of a meeting may be recognised as ministers at the discretion of the Monthly Meeting, 'when their

fruits afford sufficient evidence of their qualification for so important a service.' Elders are appointed by the Monthly Meetings. Their duties are 'tenderly to encourage and help young ministers, and advise others as they, in the wisdom of God, see occasion.' 'Age or wealth is not to be an inducement in the choice : but let such be appointed as fear God, love His truth in sincerity, are sound in Christian doctrine, and of clean hands.'

The Ministers and Elders together form a separate Quarterly Meeting and a separate Yearly Meeting. Their Quarterly Meeting is consulted by its Monthly Meeting prior to the admission of ministers, and deliberates on the welfare of the Society generally. The Yearly Meeting has a necessarily wider scope, and one of its functions is to receive and read the answers to the queries from the Quarterly Meetings, so that an opportunity may be afforded of imparting such advice as shall be necessary.

Provision is made in the constitution of the Society of Friends that any member who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Monthly Meeting in any matter affecting himself may appeal to the General Quarterly Meeting, a further appeal lying to the General Yearly Meeting.

In each case the matter is referred to a Committee ; but if the matter relates to faith and doctrine, either party may ask for a decision from the Meeting itself.

The position of women in the Society is recognised by a system of Women's Meetings. 'It is our Christian advice that you do encourage faithful women's meetings, and the settling of them where they are wanting, and may with convenience be settled.' There are also Quarterly and Yearly Meetings of Women. The duties of the Women's Monthly Meeting consist in relieving the wants of the poor of their own sex, in taking cognisance of proposals for marriage, and in co-operating with

the Men's Monthly Meeting in the appointment of Overseers and the admission of members.

5. With the Wesleyan Methodists, as with all the Methodist bodies, membership of the Society is involved in membership of a class-meeting, admission to which is granted by a minister if he be satisfied with the religious condition of the candidate. Class-leaders, local preachers, stewards of various kinds—poor-stewards, chapel-stewards, circuit-stewards—trustees of the Connexional property, and the ministers form the Quarterly Meeting of each circuit; each minister and certain representatives from the Quarterly Meeting constitute the District Meeting, and the District Meeting arranges what circuits are to send delegates to the annual Conference. Till quite recently ministers only were admitted to the Conference, but lay representatives are now permitted to take part in all proceedings of financial interest. The Conference legally consists of only 100 members, who must be 'preachers and expounders,' and to whom, by the Deed of Declaration enrolled in Chancery in 1784, is given authority 'to expel and put forth from being a member thereof, or from being in connection therewith, or from being upon trial, any person from any cause which to the Conference may seem fit or necessary.' The election of President and all other officers is located in the whole body of ministers accredited to each Conference. In several of the smaller Methodist Societies much greater prominence is given to lay representation, and even the Presidential chair is not restricted to a minister.

III.

In the trust-deed of nearly every Baptist or Independent church is contained a statement of the particular religious opinions which the minister is to teach and the members to accept. Each trust-deed has necessarily the force of law ; and, though its provisions are rarely enforced by an appeal to the civil arm, a recent trial has resulted in the expulsion of a minister who was convicted of contravening them. The terms of the trust-deeds admit of a wide variety of Christian belief. Both among the Baptists and the Independents they variously point towards Arminianism on the one hand, and towards Calvinism on the other, while large scope of view is often permitted on the Trinitarian and Unitarian aspects of our religion. In a few cases perfect liberty of preaching is allowed to the minister, but even among the Unitarians this is rare.

1. There are among the Baptists several confessions of faith, each of them being merely a standard of reference, and in no sense binding upon a particular congregation. The earliest of these is the Baptist Confession of 1688, more widely known as the *Philadelphia Confession*. It is based upon the Westminster Confession and the Savoy Declaration, and is generally accepted in this country and in America by all Calvinistic Baptists. Its distinctive teaching is contained in the clauses which state that those who do actually profess repentance towards God, and faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus,

are the only proper subjects of baptism ; and that 'immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.'

The *New Hampshire Confession*, which dates from 1833, is acknowledged by most of the Baptists of the Northern and Western States of America. Its phraseology is dignified and subdued, and the article which treats of baptism goes no further than the expression of a belief that 'Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost.'

The *Confession of the Free Will Baptists of America* was issued in 1834, and revised in 1848, 1865, and 1868. It consists of twenty-one chapters, and is a large-hearted declaration of the ordinary evangelical belief. 'Christian baptism' is simply and piously defined as 'the immersion of believers in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in which are represented the burial and resurrection of Christ, the death of Christians to the world, the washing of their souls from the pollution of sin, their rising to newness of life, their engagement to serve God, and their resurrection at the last day.'

The *Confession of the Seven Congregations* was drawn up in London in 1646, but is now quite obsolete. It speaks of baptism as 'an ordinance of the New Testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed upon persons professing faith, or that are made disciples.' 'The way and manner of dispensing this ordinance is by dipping or plunging the body under water.'

2. The oldest standard of the Independents is the *Savoy Declaration of the Congregational Churches*, which

dates from 1658. It is to a large extent a reproduction of the Westminster Confession adapted by various omissions and additions to the polity of the Congregationalists. It lays down very distinctly the doctrine of separate congregations, and declares that 'besides these particular churches there is not instituted by Christ any church more extensive or catholic, entrusted with power for the administration of His ordinances, or the execution of any authority in His name.' It holds that the manner of the call of 'a pastor, teacher, or elder unto office consists in the election of the church, together with his acceptance of it, and separation by fasting and prayer.'

In 1833, two years after its foundation, the Congregational Union adopted a *Declaration of the Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters*, which was not, however, put forth authoritatively or as a standard demanding assent. 'Disallowing the utility of creeds and articles of religion as a bond of union, and protesting against subscription to any human formularies as a term of communion, Congregationalists are yet willing to declare, for general information, what is commonly believed among them, reserving to every one the most perfect liberty of conscience.' It is further stated that they 'wish it to be observed that, notwithstanding their jealousy of subscription to creeds and articles, and their disapproval of the imposition of any human standard, whether of faith or discipline, they are far more agreed in their doctrines and practices than any church which enjoins subscription and enforces a human standard of orthodoxy.' The fourteenth article expresses a belief 'that all who will be saved were the

objects of God's eternal and electing love, and were given by an act of Divine Sovereignty to the Son of God : which in no way interferes with the system of means, nor with the grounds of human responsibility : being wholly unrevealed as to its objects, and not a rule of human duty.' On the subject of baptism it is said that Congregationalists 'believe in its perpetual obligation . . . to be administered to all converts to Christianity and their children, by the application of water to the subject, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' The doctrine of separate churches is stated as explicitly as in the Savoy Declaration, the words being that 'the Congregational churches hold it to be the will of Christ that true believers should voluntarily assemble together to observe religious ordinances, to promote mutual edification and holiness, to perpetuate and propagate the Gospel in the world, and to advance the glory and worship of God, through Jesus Christ ; and that each society of believers, having these objects in view in its formation, is properly a Christian church.'

In June 1865 a simple *Declaration of Faith of the National Council of Congregationalists* was adopted at Plymouth, Massachusetts, on the spot where the first meeting-house of the Pilgrim Fathers stood, the elders and managers of the Congregational churches of the United States 'standing,' as the document touchingly says, 'by the rock where the Pilgrims set foot upon these shores, upon the spot where they worshipped God, and among the graves of the early generations.'

As recently as November 17, 1871, a declaration of

the National Congregational Council was made at Oberlin, Ohio ; it enunciated no new doctrines or principles.

3. The chart of all Presbyterianism is still the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. It was drawn up by the Assembly of Divines in 1643, and published four years later. It consists of 33 chapters divided into 172 sections. It discusses elaborately every question of religious belief and various points of spiritual discipline. The Scriptures are insisted upon as the one and only rule of faith, 'those former ways—*i.e.* the light of nature and the works of creation and providence—of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.' 'The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself ; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.'

The famous third chapter of the *Confession* treats 'Of God's eternal decree,' and is the most merciless statement of uncompromising Calvinism which has ever been made. The first section states that 'God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass ; yet so as neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.' It may be well to quote the third, fourth, and seventh sections as they stand :—

'III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto

everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

‘IV. These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed ; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.’

‘VII. The rest of mankind ’—that is, ‘those who are not predestinated to life ’—‘ God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, or to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.’

The tenth chapter, ‘Of effectual calling,’ declares that ‘elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit ;’ but that ‘others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved ; much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any way whatsoever.’

4. The most authoritative Quaker confession, though it has never received official endorsement, is contained in the fifteen propositions put forth in 1675 by Robert Barclay. He styles them *Theses* and *Theologicae*, and they are addressed ‘to the clergy, of what sort soever, . . . but more particularly to the Doctors, Professors, and Students of Divinity in the universities and schools of Great Britain, whether Prelatical, Presbyterian, or any other.’ They are put forward as expressive of ‘that

simple, naked truth which man by his wisdom hath rendered so obscure and mysterious, and by way of counteracting that 'school divinity, which taketh up almost a man's whole lifetime to learn, brings not a whit nearer to God, neither makes any man less wicked or more righteous than he was.'

The testimony of the Spirit is throughout insisted upon as 'that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed.' The Scriptures 'are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty . . . according to the Scriptures, the Spirit is the first and principal Leader.' The sixth proposition points out that 'this certain doctrine thus being received, to wit, that there is an evangelical and saving light and grace in all, the universality of the love and mercy of God towards mankind—both in the death of His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the manifestation of the light in the heart—is established and confirmed against all the objections of such as deny it.' The proposition 'Concerning Worship' is a very definite declaration of the Quaker plan. 'All true and acceptable worship to God is offered in the inward and immediate moving and drawing of His own Spirit, which is neither limited to places, times, or persons;' and all other worship, 'both praises, prayers, and preachings, which man sets about in his own will, and at his own appointment, which he can both begin and end at his pleasure, do or leave undone, as himself sees meet, whether they be a prescribed form, as a liturgy, or prayers conceived extemporarily, by the natural strength

and faculty of the mind, they are all but superstitions, will-worship, and abominable idolatry in the sight of God.'

The twelfth proposition speaks of the baptism of infants as 'a mere human tradition, for which neither precept nor practice is to be found in the Scripture.'

5. There is no condensed statement of the religious belief of English Wesleyan Methodists ; but the *Model Trust Deed* of 1832 provides that in the case of chapels of the Connexion where it is adopted 'no person shall be permitted to preach or expound in the said chapel or premises, who shall teach any doctrine contrary to what is contained in certain *Notes to the New Testament*, by the late John Wesley, and the *first four volumes of sermons* reputed to be written by him.' These notes and sermons, subscription to which is required from every minister of the Connexion, contain an elaborate enunciation of the two leading doctrines of Methodism—sensible conversion and perfection.

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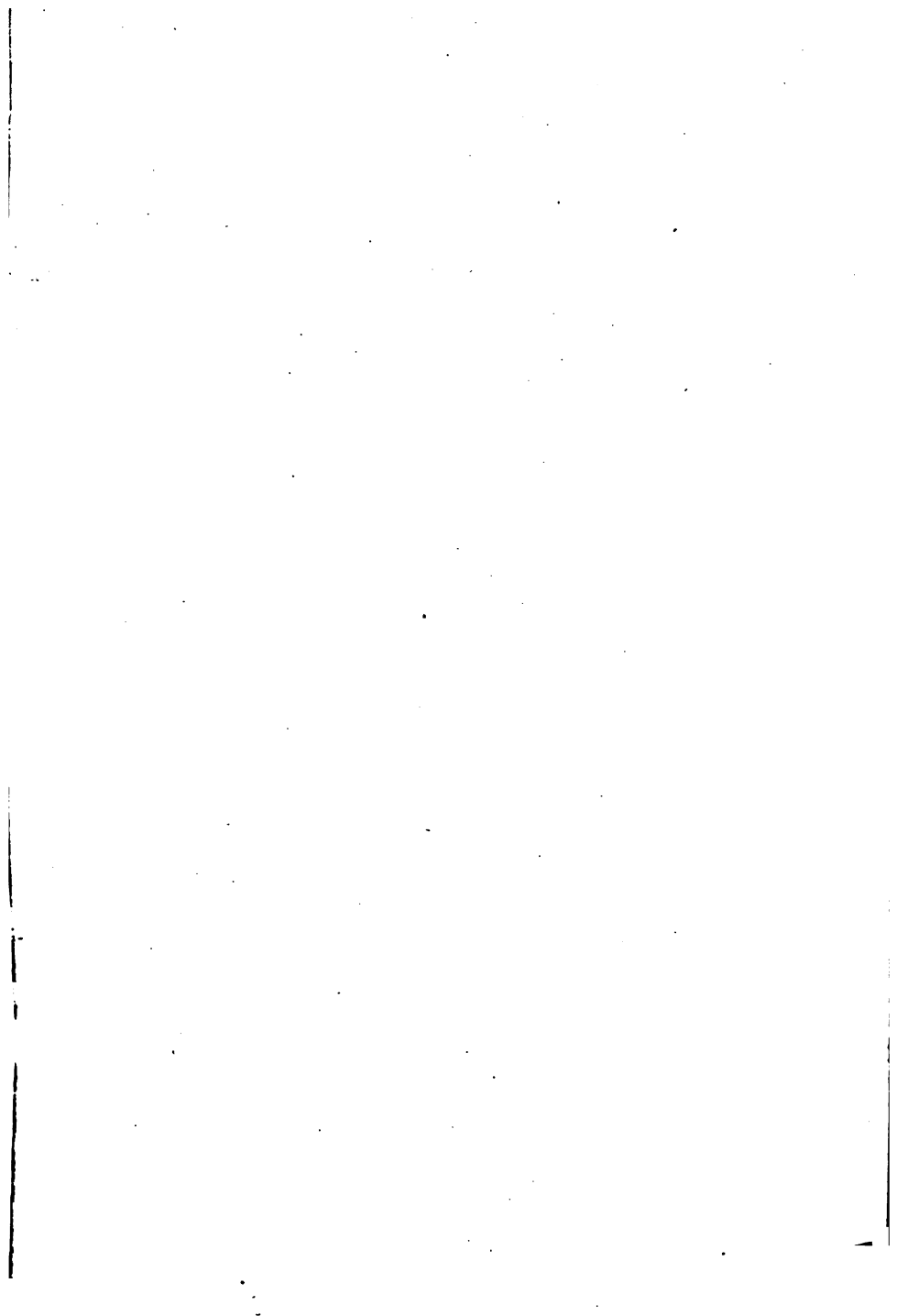
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